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COMMONWEAL

CHRISTMAS BOOKS

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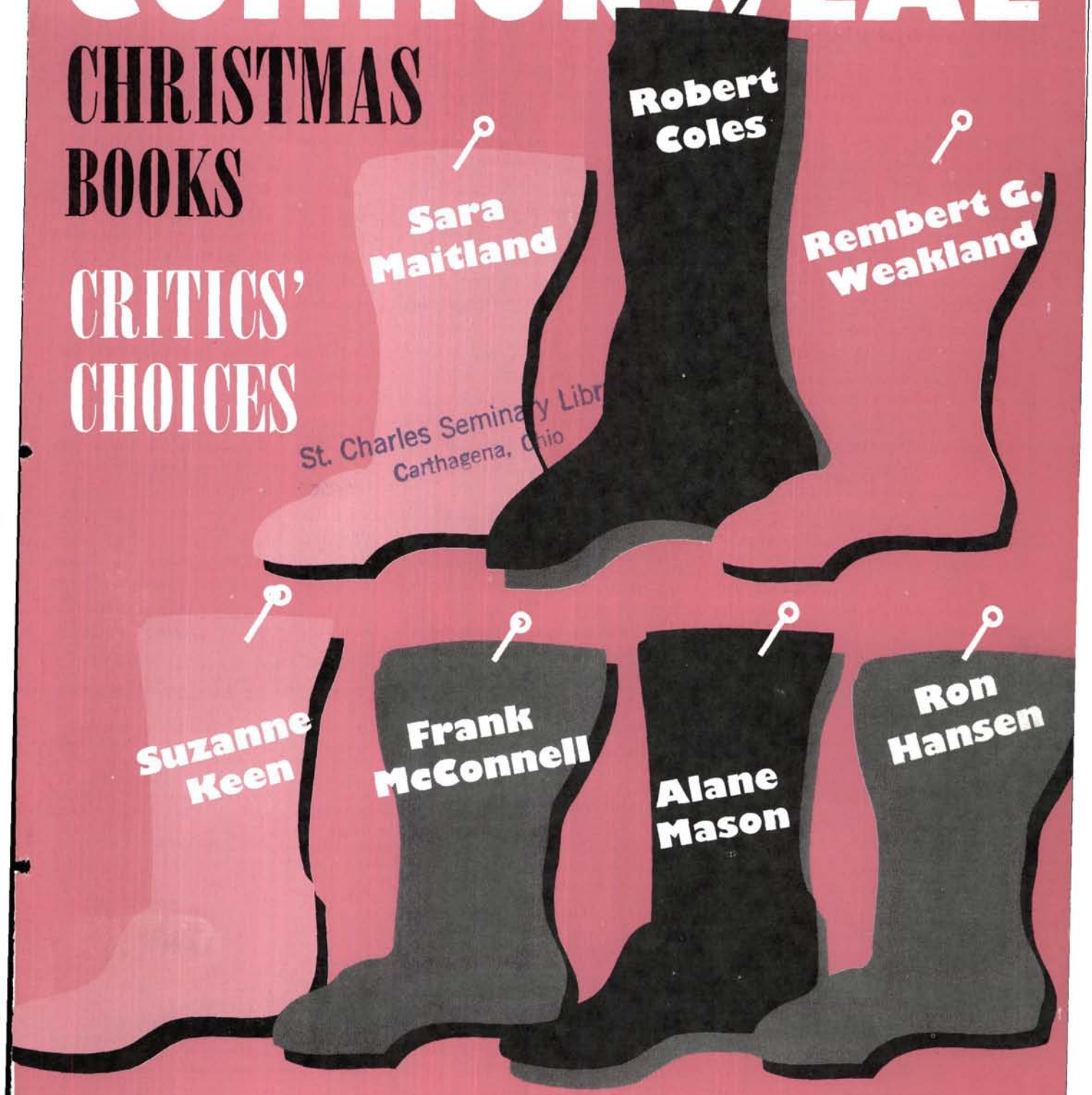

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CORRESPONDENCE

Not then but now

San Antonio, Tex.

To the Editors: Edward Gaffney's ignorance of the subject on which he pontificates ["One Troubled Family," November 4] is illustrated by his identification of the Shankill Road as Belfast's Catholic ghetto.

More troublesome is his basic thesis, namely, that memories of ancient wrongs underlie the past twenty-five years of murderous conflict. No. That conflict resulted from the determination of one party to end present wrongs—the disparity in job opportunity and housing—and the determination of the other party to maintain the disparity.

The failure of the British government to deal with the human rights issue since it reinstituted direct rule in 1972 is evident in the most recent employment statistics. While a Nationalist (Catholic) was twice as likely as a Unionist (Protestant) to be unemployed in 1968, the disparity has now grown to a ratio of two-and-a-half to one.

GARY MacEOIN

The writer is author of Northern Ireland: Captive of History.

Dysfunctional parent

Blue Bell, Pa.

To the Editors: I hardly know where to begin in responding to Edward Gaffney's wrongheaded, patronizing, and seriously uninformed column, "One Troubled Family." The column's insufferable middle-class bias comes dangerously close to blaming the victim. The good people of Northern Ireland are not committed to mutual self-destruction. Reconciliation between communities that have been set against one another by an exploitative colonial administration is a necessary part of the process, but not the only element in the search for peace, and it cannot be expected to take place without other radical changes in the society.

If we are to accept the "dysfunctional family" analogy favored by Gaffney, we must look at the whole family, including the abusive "parent" who still lives with the family and still inflicts grievous harm. In contrast with the efforts of human rights organizations like Amnesty International, the religious press has been notoriously quiet on the issue of government-inflicted human rights abuse in Northern Ireland. The institutionalized violence of Northern Ireland, including discrimination, repression, and physical and psychological abuse of citizens, is not a thing of the past but something the Nationalist and Unionist people live with every day, and yet it is never mentioned by Gaffney. In the circumstances, it took remarkable courage on the part of people who felt that physical force was their only protection to lay down their arms. That commentators now speak of family therapy for the dysfunctional is an insult.

And whether Gaffney likes the Rev. Ian Paisley or not, when Paisley accuses Britain of having sold out the Unionists, he is honestly reflecting a view widely held in his community, and one that is not without some compelling supporting evidence. Such views are important and must not be brushed off as a "distraction."

ANN McGAUGHAN

The writer is a director of American Protestants for Truth about Ireland.

The author replies:

Both my correspondents are much surer than I that we disagree deeply. "Ignorant" (MacEoin) and "wrongheaded" (McGaughan) I may be, but I didn't mean to be "patronizing" nor was I speaking "piously" when I used the metaphor of family therapy as a way of understanding the way forward for the many parties in Northern Ireland who are both deeply connected with and deeply divided from one another. As the column noted: (1) the metaphor wasn't of my coining but was offered by two Irish psychiatrists; (2) it was only a metaphor, insufficient to reflect the complexity of the situation; and (3) what I had in mind was not a shrink's couch but a conference table.

Moreover, I think the metaphor makes a point—especially if, as McGaughan recommends and I intended, it is seen as "a necessary part of the peace process but not the only element." Curiously, after excoriating the figure, McGaughan makes use of it by denouncing the British government as "an abusive parent." In my view, therapy isn't just happy talk for the middle class; it's for anyone who can benefit from shedding unnecessary defenses and learning the discipline of genuine civility toward others. But therapy is not easy; it is often resisted in the first stages and is hard work even for the willing. Thus, the point of the metaphor is not to blame victims, but to commend a process of political negotiation that can bring an end to victimization.

I agree with MacEoin that the major source of the current troubles has been "the disparity in job opportunity and housing." As another leader has said, "It's the economy, stupid." For decades I have regarded Gary MacEoin as one of the most thoughtful proponents of this view of Irish history. But now I am puzzled when the noted author of *Northern Ireland: Captive*

(Continued on page 30)

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COMMONWEAL

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After the deluge

Following the American Revolution, there was a burst of energy in American society so great that historians have likened it to an explosion. The energy produced propelled not only the great geographical expansion westward, but a vast entrepreneurial and even religious awakening. According to Gordon S. Wood (*The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, Knopf), within a few short decades a new society had been created, a democratic polity unlike any other before seen in history.

What was the catalyst that powered this remarkable social and political development? According to Wood, it was the notion of equality, the most radical ideological force set free by the Revolution. So powerful was this liberating concept that Herman Melville went so far as to call it "The great God absolute! The center and circumference of all democracy."

Last month's midterm election was an explosion. Born of voter anger, frustration, and even enmity, it led to an earthquake in the political landscape. Across the land and across the board, Republicans gained not only parity but dominance. As one long-time Tennessee Democrat put it, explaining his defection: "The Republicans are the party of the people now." Deeply troubling for Democrats (particularly in the South), is that Republicans took command not only of the political momentum but of the farm clubs: statehouses and numerous legislatures. It is not going to be easy for the Democrats to recover the people's confidence.

But politics in America are anything but simple. All of the vows in the Republicans' "Contract with America" notwithstanding, Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and his young cohorts will not rebuild Washington in a day. Nor should they. Most Americans are still not against government. What they want is honest, efficient, responsive government; a fair shake, not a shakedown. Their main concerns are the pit-in-the-stomach issues: remunerative employment for themselves and their children; safety on their streets; and a renewed moral sense that will insure a coherent and enduring future.

President Bill Clinton, elected in 1992 to change the way Washington does business, failed to deliver and became the lightning rod of all discontent. Weakened and, we hope, chastened, he is not yet a lame duck. While he retains his office and his platform, both potent symbols, he will be met head-on by the opposition on issues from free trade to foreign policy (*see*, J. Bryan Hehir, page 9). How he responds to divided government will prove his mettle. Instead of reacting tactically and piecemeal to the majority's onslaughts, his only hope is to articulate a positive vision, one that speaks to the better instincts of all Americans. He must stress hard work, the common good, planning for tomorrow, and equal opportunity for all.

To anyone who has seen Clinton at press conferences and town meetings, he

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comes across as smart and caring. He should use such forums to reach out to the American people. But it will do little good unless he has first made up his mind what he wants to do. Demonstrating discipline, tenacity, and enthusiasm in a difficult situation is the only way he will get people to take him seriously, and even that may not be enough.

Republicans claim a mandate, but, schooled in obstruction, they must now learn to govern. The public will demand that they shrink the size of government—cutting budgets of congressional committees and staffs—and, at long last, reform campaign financing. With the latter in place, the need for mandating term limits—a draconian solution to a real problem—will be obviated. After all, the election of 1994 proved the Founders correct: an aroused electorate can clean house anytime it wants.

Welfare reform should come at the top of the legislative list. Senator Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.) was right to have advised the president to undertake it before health-care reform. But here, too, draconian measures—such as the harsh suggestion of Congressman James Talent (R-Mo.) to deny payments to children born of mothers younger than twenty-six, and to place such children in orphanages—must be vigorously resisted. Such radicalism would plunge the country into a bitter and divisive confrontation. The only reasonable possibility of an independent future for many people who receive welfare is a decent job. It will not do to offer them a stone.

President Clinton has already indicated he favors a line-item veto. He should make it a legislative priority, using its passage as a test of the new majority's professed bipartisanship. With it in hand, he will be able to save the Republicans from their habitual temptation to adopt Reaganesque deficit financing. Tax cuts may be possible, but they must be accounted for beforehand. Thus far, the Republicans' "Contract" comes nowhere near paying for what it promises. Alice Rivlin, director of the budget, has it right: "Now that the president has helped restore financial discipline, the last thing that we need is a return to the failed policies and soaring deficits of yesteryear."

The new Republican majority has set out a bold task for itself, but when it comes to cutting the size of government, the proof of the pudding will be in the swallowing. As Republican strategist William Kristol has rightly warned: "If a Republican-led Congress can't cut farm subsidies and big-business entitlements, then we forfeit any legitimate claim to being the party that wanted to cut government" (*Wall Street Journal*, November 10).

In a preelection issue, the *Economist* (November 5) devoted its cover story to the growing economic inequality within the developed nations. In the United States, it noted, the distance between the haves and the have-nots has reached a postwar high, a disparity more pronounced here than in any other major economic power. Such inequality, the *Economist* noted, leads to social stress and slower economic growth and productivity. Equality of opportunity, democracy's novel and most powerful means of encouraging equality of condition, is something Democrats used to talk about. It is time they rediscovered how to make it happen.

ET CETERA

SATAN WHO? Professor Jon D. Levenson is the Albert A. List professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard and the author of *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, and Historical Criticism* (Westminster/John Knox). He is also a very funny man. Recently Levenson spoke at the Jewish Theological Seminary on Manhattan's Upper West Side, and had his audience laughing during much of his lecture on the very heady topic of "Creation and Anti-Creation: God and His Enemies."

At one point Levenson recalled a discussion he had with a class about Satan, and reflected on how difficult it is these days to rely on a base of common cultural knowledge. Levenson was contrasting the Satan of the Bible with the Satan of Milton. He noticed, however, that only consternation was evident on the faces of his students. Finally, one student raised his hand and asked the inevitable question: "Who is Milton?"

Always eager to amuse, Levenson responded: "Milton Berle, of course." (*See,* Rembert G. Weakland, page 25.)

There were a few laughs, but then another hand went up. "Who's Milton Berle?"

That's just how desperate the cultural situation is, Levenson laughed.

RELIGION & THE MEDIA From a speech given by Archbishop Oscar H. Lipscomb (Pensacola, Florida, September 9, 1994): "I wish to say something concerning the attention paid by the news media to David Trosch, a Catholic priest who advocates killing abortionists. The media have restored to him the pulpit that I, as his archbishop, have denied him. Trosch is not a newsmaker in any legitimate sense. In stating his views, he represents no one but himself....

"Why...should the media give this priest the kind of coverage he currently enjoys? Apparently, the sensationalism of a man in a Roman collar advocating killing is reason enough. That should not be so. David Trosch has never held any position of leadership in the prolife movement. Indeed, its leaders have repudiated his opinions. The media need to reexamine standards that permit them to ignore the many prolife leaders, representing millions, who speak compassionately and sensibly in the prolife cause, while giving enormous publicity to a figure on the fringes, in fact beyond the fringe."

AS LONG AS IT'S A LAW! If you are still wondering why the Vatican nixed the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible for liturgical and catechetical use, consider the following which had to be cut from Gabe Huck's "Rome Speaks: Inclusive Language Verboten" (November 18): The "draft" letter sent by the Congregation for Worship to Archbishop William Keeler in June gave this explanation. "Following upon an examination of the NRSV of the Sacred Scripture by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and in fidelity to the principle *lex credendi, lex orandi*, it has been decided that this

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translation is not suitable for liturgical use."

What was that principle again? The Vatican letter has it, "the law of believing is the law of praying." But the maxim known to Catholic tradition is not *lex credendi, lex orandi* (which would let the CDF shape all liturgy from the universal catechism), it is *lex orandi, lex credendi*, "the law of praying is the law of believing." Well, it was only a tradition.

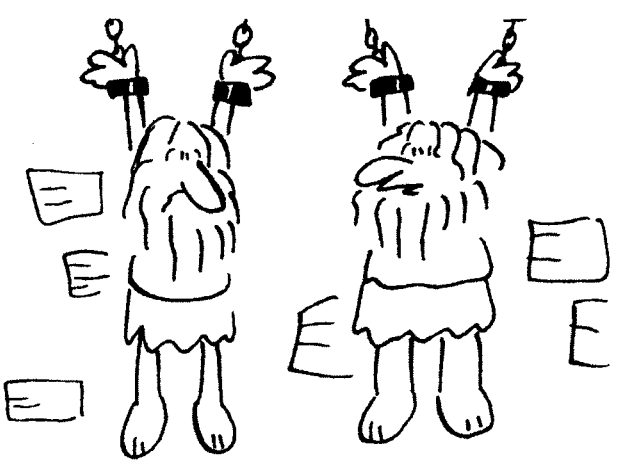
NOTEBOOK

A NEW ROLE FOR HILLARY

CIRCUIT-RIDING FIRST LADY

Hillary Rodham Clinton has been banished to the nether world where bad girls are sent when the fates decide they have brought down the wrath of the gods on the *polis*. Her disappearance from public life suggests that she is willing to undertake at least her fair share of repentance for the election debacle. Yet, as she visited an Indonesian Buddhist shrine on a postelection visit with President Bill Clinton, I imagined her sinking gratefully into a lotus position, sending off the media and the blame-mongers to badger someone else. Everyone and everything from Mrs. Clinton to the baseball strike, from George Stephanopoulous to the health-care bill, have been implicated in the Democratic fall from power, but Mrs. Clinton is the one who has stopped spinning and disappeared. She has become a wifely shade of her former self.

Does Mrs. Clinton's eclipse mean political wives are destined to take on the roles that other women in the United States are no longer required to play: wife and fashion plate? Mrs. Mom? shrinking violet? Barbara Bush looked to be the last first lady who stood by her man mugging for the cameras. Activist professionals on the order of Hillary Clinton are the kind of wives that will come along with future presidents, if they have wives at all. Democratic hopeful Bob Kerrey, who is divorced, would come without a first lady. Marilyn Quayle and Elizabeth Dole may be Republicans but they look a lot like Hillary Clinton. Even harder to imagine, but another obvious alternative, would be the *first* first lady who turns down the job and sticks with her own career—say as a partner in Little Rock's Rose law firm.



"Hey, I can't remember, are we prisoners of the church or the state?"

Yet, Hillary Clinton is the kind of woman this society has said it wants; at least in general; and yes, even conservatives have said it. She followed the rules: education, good works, marriage, motherhood, and career. And exceptionally for her generation, her religion holds more than a symbolic place in her life. The Clintons belong to a Washington Methodist congregation and go to church on Sunday; they are not drop-in worshipers. Furthermore, Mrs. Clinton gives every sign of being a serious believer. In an astonishing Torquemada-moment in a recent interview with Kenneth Woodward (*Newsweek*, October 31, 1994), she submitted to a confession of faith:

"Do you believe in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?" "Yes."

"The atoning death of Jesus?" "Yes."

"The Resurrection of Christ?" "Yes."

In the same interview, she also said she thinks abortion is wrong, but should not be criminalized. There is a lot of room in that view for public discussion of the whys and wherefores of "individual" choice, and even a look at the social outcome of abortions for women and families. Perhaps in her remaining two years, the first lady could initiate a national conversation on the subject.

Real religious practices and moral beliefs are subdued in our political culture. As with many (all?) politicians, there is a disconnect between the Clintons' policy positions and their moral beliefs. This need not be.

In fact, Hillary Clinton's first lady problem is much like the country's problem with religion and politics—we want religion and first ladies to be seen but not heard, present but not voting. When push comes to shove, religion and first ladies should make way for *realpolitik*. Can this subterfuge continue to work, whether for first ladies or religion?

The peculiar mix that we have tolerated in politicians of muffling personal belief while enunciating public policy claims a dubious blessing from the Constitution. But over the last two decades, the separation between personal belief and political action has had the effect of draining the very idea of a moral stance from political debate while allowing demagogues of right and left to turn religion to their own purposes. On the right: How far will a school prayer amendment really travel in Republican ranks when it comes time to vote? On the left: Consider how abortion proponents, in emphasizing the religious objections of the Catholic church and other religious groups while ignoring more general ethical and social objections, have short-circuited efforts to even carry on a debate about the pros and cons of abortion.

Maybe the one role Hillary Clinton has left to play as first lady is the one that convention has kept her from—an advocate for personal conversion and social responsibility. That is the kind of Methodism John Wesley preached and that this country could use. She should give it a try, as soon as she gets out of the lotus position.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

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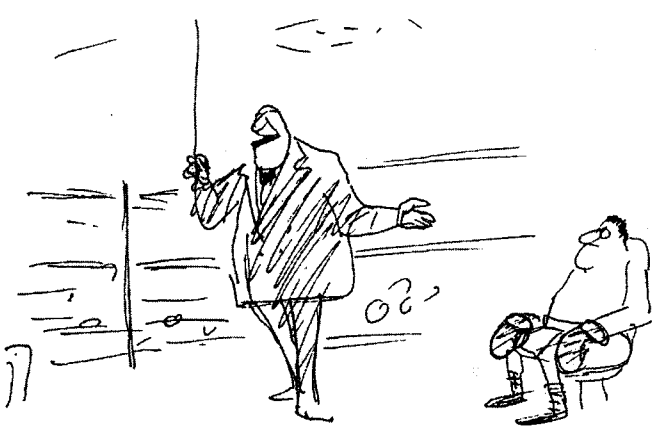
CAN REPUBLICANS GOVERN?

NOT THE WAY THEY CAMPAIGNED

Even a Jeremiah might have found the elections of 1994 a bit much. There were scattered consolations: some Republican newcomers, like Olympia Snowe in Maine, have real quality; Diane Feinstein beat Michael Huffington; above all, as Democrats everywhere reminded each other, Oliver North lost in Virginia. But even Chicago voters, who used to know better, turned away from Dan Rostenkowski, and too many first-rate public servants, like David Price in North Carolina, were rewarded with defeat.

Voting was a tad higher than expected, about 39 percent of those eligible, and Republicans got more of their supporters to the polls. Differences in turnout certainly defeated Mario Cuomo, for example; 69 percent of upstate registered voters, but only 46 percent of those in New York City made it to the voting booth. Resentment was the order of the day, at least among the part of the electorate that tipped the scales. Democrats, the targets of anger, also suffered from the disappointment and indifference of many potential supporters, and the one clear verdict in 1994 was against the party's stewardship since President Bill Clinton took office.

Beyond this negative message, however, the electorate's voice was inarticulate or incoherent. The voters chose divided government as a remedy for unproductive government and effectively asked for more ideological posturing, although that is probably the last thing they had in mind. "I don't know where they are going," former Republican senator Howard Baker said sensibly, "and I don't think they know where either. But...if we do not address their feelings, they may develop a tendency to savage our institutions." Over the next two years, the Republican majorities in Congress will jockey for position against Clinton and the Democrats in the hope of turning this year's gain into a permanent majority. The election of 1994, however, is more mood than mandate, and the political future is uncomfortably up for grabs.



"In this corner, affectionately known as loser...."

Issues played a remarkably minor role in the election; upward of 70 percent of the voters, the polls tell us, have never even heard of the Republicans' "Contract with America." A very high percentage of the citizenry holds that government doesn't work and can't be trusted, but this hostility—especially toward Washington—does not bespeak any particular confidence in market forces or the dynamics of private life.

Americans think that something is fundamentally wrong with the economy, all the good numbers to the contrary; the Clinton administration's happy-talk about those statistics only made it seem out of touch. For a long time, most Americans have been working more and getting less. Quality jobs are scarce, and some 25 percent of us expect a relative or close friend to become unemployed over the next few years. International competition is a constant threat, while pell-mell, we are being asked to reshape ourselves to the measure of half-mysterious technologies. Immigration—an issue that helped reelect Republican Governor Pete Wilson in California and Democrat Lawton Chiles in Florida—typifies the more general truth that Americans, as Michael Sandel observes, are "haunted by the fear that we are losing control of the forces that govern our lives."

The voters indicated some willingness to try Republican policies, particularly as a check-and-balance to Clinton's, but Republicans will get it wrong if they read the returns as an endorsement of *laissez-faire*. GOP ideologues like Bill Archer of Texas cherish dreams of doing away with the income tax, but the same Montana electorate that sent Republican Conrad Burns back to the Senate also rejected a proposal to limit the state's graduated income tax. Voters expect government to be responsible for the economic and social future, and they cast their votes, above all, for policies that can reduce their sense of vulnerability.

Similarly, the voters' desire for effective measures against crime or to strengthen families point toward government and not away from it. Both parties will certainly advocate and try to take credit for some form of welfare reform, but insistence on "workfare," for example, entails providing the work as well as the daycare and other services needed to make it feasible.

A good deal of the turn to the right in 1994 is also a rebuke to relativism and to cultural elites, and to that extend, Newt Gingrich is right: the results of the election are an affirmation of the decencies that Democrats will ignore at their peril. But Gingrich and his allies will have to take care not to overplay their hand: the decencies, for most Americans, include broad tolerance, and the voters in Idaho, sweeping the Democrats out of the statehouse, also appear to have rejected a measure limiting gay rights. And attending to the malaise of the culture presumes a government with considerable responsibility for the reconstruction of the moral order.

For Democrats, 1994 should be a "call to arms," just as Doris Kearns says, but they will need a clearer recognition of their real strengths and weaknesses. This year, Democrats lost across the electorate, Jews and African-Americans excepted.

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The falling off was serious among men, but Democrats also lost some support from women, and Hispanic defections were also notable. Yet the Democrats did not lose ground to the Republicans as a party; the balance of party preferences remained about even. And Democrats did relatively well with younger voters, confirming a shift away from the trend of the Reagan years.

As I read the data, Republican gains in Middle America offer the best explanation for the debacle of 1994. Democrats suffered major losses among voters at middle levels of age, education, and income; Diane Feinstein led Huffington among voters at the bottom, but also the top of the income scale. President Clinton's policies, the crime bill partially excepted, have not done much to address the concerns of Middle Americans directly. Even his reduction in the deficit was successfully distorted by Republicans, so that most Americans believe that the deficit has increased. And by championing NAFTA, Clinton allied himself, however wisely, with forces threatening the social world of Middle America. Since Clinton's neoliberalism plays down any appeal to class conflict and cultivates corporate support, it is not entirely surprising—though it is certainly arresting—that half of the respondents in one poll identified the Democrats as the party of "the rich." And such perceptions are magnified by the belief that Clinton's vacillations, his verbal affirmations to the contrary, reflect the relativist-to-nihilist strain of the cultural elite. Bill Clinton, to a substantial number of Americans, is less a boy from Hope than a man from Yale.

Historically, the Democrats have been the American party of equality, devoted to the belief that the majority has the right, within the limits of nature, to control its own political destiny. In recent years, however, the party has often seemed less interested in upholding majority rule than in limiting it in favor of the rights of minorities and other favored constituencies—no different, in this respect, from Republicans, the apologists for the rights of property. Both parties, in this sense, have developed an elitist strain, which explains why so many Americans are attracted by the doomed allure of a possible third party. After 1994, the Democrats have compelling reasons to reaffirm their commitment to what Chesterton called America's "romance," the belief that no one must aspire to be more, or endure to be less, than a citizen

WILSON CAREY McWILLIAMS

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WORLD WATCH

J. Bryan Hehir

THE FUTURE OF FOREIGN POLICY

THE ODD COUPLE: BILL & JESSE`

The elections of 1994 had one overwhelming result and multiple explanations about the roots of the Republican victory. Sorting through the commentators, it was possible to draw one clear conclusion: the election was *not* about foreign policy. The topic hardly surfaced during the campaign, and no analyst attributed the decisive Democratic defeat to foreign-policy issues. This does not mean the country is satisfied with the Clinton policy; more likely, it is yet another sign that post-cold war Americans define their most threatening problems in domestic terms (even if some of them are rooted in international issues like trade or immigration policy).

Nevertheless, if foreign policy did not influence the election it will inevitably be affected by the results of the Republican victory. Secretary of State Warren Christopher immediately sought to reassure allies and others that continuity in foreign policy would survive decisive change in domestic politics. But a *Washington Post* editorial, commenting on Christopher's speech, provided the appropriate balance: "There is a continuity to national interest, but foreign policy is set partly on the thermostat of domestic politics. The country has moved to the right, and as a result its international outlook moves to the right, too, in some degree yet to be told."

"What would you suggest for somebody at a policymaking level?"

Testing the meaning of this move to the right requires a comment on the role of Congress in the foreign policy process, the composition of Republican leadership on foreign policy, and the likely response of the Clinton administration to a Republican Congress. In the 1990s the Congress has maintained a low profile on foreign policy. It is standard fare to acknowledge the primacy of the presidency on foreign policy in the American constitutional system. Initiative always rests with the executive; the Congress is inherently a responsive partner whose most potent instruments are the ultimate power to declare war and the power of the purse. The highpoint of congressional engagement in the foreign policy of the 1990s was the debate in both Houses about the Gulf War. Since that quite substantive and significant debate, the concerns of the Congress have been overwhelmingly domestic (NAFTA being as

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much domestic as foreign policy). The major congressional committees, Foreign Relations and Foreign Affairs, have been marginal actors in the foreign-policy process. More noticeable has been the lack of key congressional leaders with a defined foreign-policy perspective. The role of Senator Arthur Vandenberg in the 1940s or Senator William Fulbright in the 1960s has been approached only by Sam Nunn (D-Ga.). Quite apart from the November elections, therefore, a troubling characteristic of recent policy debate has been the absence of a distinctive congressional perspective.

What perspective might Congress now produce under Republican leadership? At the level of principles and issues, only general predictions are possible. The "Contract with America" and initial statements of Republican leaders want less U.S. engagement in and support for the United Nations, no U.S. troops under UN command, and higher defense spending, although there is little specificity about programs, policies, and weapons systems. Undoubtedly a specific agenda will get spelled out, but that process will likely bring to the surface some pluralism in Republican ranks. The step from campaigning to governing should highlight the difference between a Richard Lugar's (R-Ind.) foreign policy and that of Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). Lugar's leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the 1980s produced a centrist foreign policy that had both Republican and Democratic support. It also was crucial to the development of a renewed emphasis on human rights, and a decisive role for the United States in South Africa and the Philippines. Senator Helms's role in foreign policy debate has been notable for its obstructionist tactics rather than its strategic vision. Whether Senators Lugar and John Warner (R-Va.) or Congressmen Ben Gilman (R-N.Y.) and Jim Leach (R-Iowa) in the House will be satisfied to let Helms represent the Republican voice in foreign policy is not yet clear. In brief, the *Washington Post* is clearly correct that politics has moved right in the United States and policy can't be far behind. But on the right there are different visions among senior Republicans of what is in the U.S. interest.

The differences with the Clinton administration will, of course, be much greater. How the administration plans to handle the foreign-policy debate substantively and tactically is not yet clear. Since the summer, to the surprise of many, foreign policy has been the president's strong suit. The U.S. role in the Middle East, Haiti, and North Korea silenced much of the criticism that accompanied the formulation of each of these policies. The policies are the result, in my view, of a more assertive role from the White House, a better coordinated policy at the Department of Defense, and the specific contribution of Christopher in the Middle East. But these particular successes are not sufficient for the challenge ahead. The problem posed by a still very unpredictable world and by a Republican Congress requires some changes in the Clinton policy process.

The president will necessarily focus on the domestic front; here the Republican challenge as embodied in Newt Gingrich's (R-Ga.) post-election statements is total and radical. For the president to break even in the struggle ahead will require enormous energy and dexterity. Moreover, part of the formula for success on foreign policy is to restrict the president's public exposure to major issues.

A restricted presidential role requires a "second voice" in the administration, someone who can articulate the framework, promises, and objectives of U.S. policy on a regular basis. No such voice has yet been heard in this administration's first two years. Christopher clearly does not fit this description. Anthony Lake has been addressing such a framework in a coordinated series of speeches, but to be the second voice will demand much more visibility of him in the policy process. Vice-President Al Gore responds on an *ad hoc* basis to issues but not in systematic fashion. Without some consistent articulation of the administration's broad policy goals and its interpretation of the world, the president will lose the foreign-policy battle substantively and tactically. On substance, Helms and Robert Dole (R-Kans.) want to restrict U.S. policy to narrowly defined national security goals. Broader engagement in multilateral diplomacy and U.S. support for UN peacekeeping will continue only if Clinton can stave off a clearly predictable challenge to his policy from the Republican leadership. On tactics, Helms's style of stifling policies through parliamentary devices will require constant engagement from the White House. Without addressing substance and tactics vigorously, Clinton will lose control of the foreign policy agenda. The election guaranteed that much. □

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CAN WE STILL TALK?

EXPERIMENTING ON HUMAN EMBRYOS

SUSAN ELLIS
GORDON MARINO

Later this month, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will decide how to review and possibly fund experiments on human embryos—embryos that in some cases will be subsequently destroyed. In our view the issue of human embryo research—which was authorized by Congress last year but not widely understood—needs to be opened to further public discussion.

For a variety of reasons, a full and informed debate did not take place in the public meetings conducted by NIH earlier this year. In those meetings, participants were allotted ten minutes to offer testimony and field questions. Many of those who spoke, some of whom were reputable scientists, passionately opposed human embryo research. But the meeting transcripts suggest that it was very difficult for some panel members to grasp that there are intelligent people who believe that human embryos are human beings and thus, no matter what the potential benefits, ought not be used as research subjects. When one panel member inquired about the panel's responsibility to consider opposition to embryo research, panel chairman Dr. Stephen Muller responded, "I don't think we have to take a view into account that there should be no human embryo research, period." In other words, the most important question the NIH panel should have been asked to consider—namely, whether public monies should support such experimentation at all—had been ruled out of bounds long before the public was given a chance to participate in the process.

A little history is in order. In September an *ad hoc* advisory panel to NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus released a draft of its report on human embryo research. The panel recommended that, subject to rigorous guidelines, certain areas of human embryo research warranted approval for federal funding, provided they were well-designed studies of therapeutic value. As we shall shortly explain, there are a multitude of so-called "spare" embryos left over from the treatment cycles of infertile women. Many people think that it would be better to use these never-to-be-implanted embryos for research than to discard them, as is now the practice. Moreover, for what it believed were sound scientific reasons, the panel included an even more controversial recommendation. It suggested that federal funding be made available for the creation of embryos intended *only* for research purposes, that is, not "left over" from infertility treatments.

The idea that public funds might support the creation of embryos for research tripped an alarm awakening many people to the fact that we have already sleepwalked across a dividing line in human history. Judging from public reaction, many Americans did not realize that Congress (and not the NIH or any other government body) had already legitimized human embryo research.

The history of that development is somewhat complicated. In 1974, when *in vitro* fertilization was in its infancy and the kind of embryo research we are considering today wasn't yet conceived, the National Commission for the Protection of Research Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research recommended the creation of an Ethics Advisory Board (EAB). The board, which was active from 1978-80, was asked to consider the ethics of *in vitro* fertilization (IVF) and embryo transfer. At that time, the EAB concluded that IVF was ethically acceptable and that given certain guidelines, research on IVF should be federally funded. These guidelines required the approval of such research by the EAB itself. However, under Ronald Reagan the EAB was never called into session and no review of applications for IVF research was allowed to go forward at the NIH. That produced a *de facto* moratorium on publicly fund-

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ed embryo research. In the vacuum created by the EAB's inaction, the private sector had the ethical green light to move forward with IVF and an essentially unregulated and very lucrative industry was born.

As the number of privately funded advances in reproductive technologies increased in the 1980s, Congress decided it was necessary for the federal government to get back into the IVF research arena. Legally, Congress had to either charter a new EAB or nullify the requirement for the existence of the long dormant board. In the NIH Revitalization Act, which became law in June 1993, Congress chose to bypass the need for EAB review on proposals involving embryo research. Consequently, the government was in the human embryo research business, and no one seemed to notice.

To their credit, NIH Director Varmus and his advisory committee decided to delay the review of research protocols using human embryos until the moral and ethical issues were thoroughly examined and appropriate guidelines set. With this task in mind, a group of nineteen individuals, known collectively as the Human Embryo Research Panel (HERP), was selected. Convening last February, the HERP's charge was to decide, taking into consideration both scientific and ethical concerns, which areas of human embryo research should receive federal support. This is the group that issued the controversial report in September.

Were it not for the use of *in vitro* fertilization as a treatment of infertility in the first place, the need, or at least the pressure, to provide government funding for human embryo research would not have arisen—at least not yet. *In vitro* fertilization refers to any fertilization of an egg outside the body of a woman. In this process, the female donor is administered a drug that hyperstimulates her ovaries, causing her to produce anywhere from 3-15 mature eggs. Invasive procedures are then used to harvest the eggs, after which they are all fertilized with sperm from her husband or another male donor. Up to three embryos are then selected for transfer to the woman's uterus, while the remainder of the embryos are frozen. Though these procedures are risky, it is a risk the woman has consented to in exchange, she hopes, for a successful pregnancy. There is at best, only a 15 percent chance that one of the three embryos will result in a live birth. If the embryos do not implant or the pregnancy does not go to full term, the woman can try again, using some of the previously frozen embryos. However, if the unused embryos are not needed for another attempt at implantation, patients have the option of paying about $100 a year to keep them in a state of suspended animation, or they can elect to have them discarded.

Ronald Green, an ethicist and panel member, argued that since *in vitro* fertilizations are performed in such vast numbers, we have a responsibility to make sure that the procedure is as safe and efficacious as possible. In its present state, IVF as a treatment for infertility is both costly and fraught with physical and psychological risks. Indeed, one woman who underwent infertility treatment testified before the panel that IVF is an industry which exacts a high financial price for racheting up unrealistic hopes and thus should not be funded at all. On the other hand, another woman testified that being deprived of the birthing experience was for her a terrible wound. Does, however, such a psychological wound justify a morally problematic treatment that we will pursue at public cost?

It is hard to imagine that the clock will be turned back on IVF. Consequently, a large number of embryos, which can either be discarded or used for research purposes, and then discarded, will continue to be produced. It is often argued with some cogency that in light of the substantial benefits that could come from doing research on these never-to-be-implanted embryos, it is nothing less than a sin not to use them for research purposes. If, however, we are willing to do research upon embryos solely because they are no longer intended for implantation, then we are in effect stating that the moral status of the embryo does not depend upon its intrinsic properties, but rather upon the intentions others have for it. Some philosophers assert that slippery slopes never materialize. Yet from the vantage point of those who opposed IVF to begin with, indeed from the vantage point of the Catholic church, the argument that we are now morally *obliged* to do research on spare embryos is proof positive that some positions do in fact come with ice and runners.

Since the narrow charge of the panel was not to decide whether or not to approve human embryo research but only to recommend what kind, it had to consider what constituted a good research proposal. Evidence was presented that there might be reason to believe that eggs from an infertile woman might not be healthy enough to use in certain types of research protocols, either because her infertility might be the result of diseased ovaries or eggs in the first place, or because of damage to the eggs from fertility drugs. Scarcity of "spare" embryos was another concern. Therefore, the panel, in its efforts to insure the highest quality research, recommended that in very circumscribed situations, eggs could be fertilized solely for research purposes. In other words, the embryos produced for research will not be "spare," for there never will have been any intent to implant them.

Approval of the production of embryos *solely* for research purposes is thus the panel's most stunning proposal. Many of the people who yawned over the discussion of IVF exploded upon hearing the news. But once again, if it is morally meet to experiment upon embryos no longer intended for implantation, then there must not be any morally compelling reason to protect embryos, period. Or again, if one cluster of embryos is not entitled to the rights and protections of personhood, why should another be?

Accept it or not, the panel argued that, up until fourteen days, and with the occurrence of what is known as the primitive streak, embryos—or as they are tellingly referred to in the report, preembryos—are morally acceptable subjects for research. In an essay in the *Wall Street Journal* (October 27), the Reverend Richard John Neuhaus excoriated the panel for drawing what he took to be an arbitrary and self-serving demarcation line through the continuum of life. The panel, however, reasoned, as have many other committees dealing with the question of human embryo research, that at fourteen days "... individua-

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tion, bodily form, and nervous system development have their beginning, considerations that greatly enhance the embryo's moral claims upon us." Besides marking the beginnings of the nervous system, no twinning can occur after this stage.

One of the people who testified at the public sessions questioned the panel's reasoning on this issue. Dr. Dianne Irving, former research biochemist with a doctoral degree in bioethics from Georgetown University, wrote her dissertation on the ethics of experimenting with surplus IVF human embryos. She told the panel that during the initial stages of her research she also had argued for personhood at fourteen days. One of the criteria she, as well as the panel, had used in defense of this limit was the belief that not all the cells prior to this stage are committed to the embryo itself. Cells on the outer layer are destined to give rise to placental tissue, while only those in the inner layer constitute the true embryo; thus, the embryo at this stage is not a coherent, organized entity or individual. However, after an extensive review of the literature, Irving concluded that, in fact, these layers are not at all distinct, and that "there is a constant interaction between all of these cells and all of these layers from fertilization on." The distinction between a pre-embryo and an embryo, for her, became a false one.

The panel also argued that sometime before fourteen days, the pre-embryo can twin or can fuse with another embryo, and therefore does not have an individual identity. However, the ability to twin or fuse ceases well before the first week after fertilization and therefore cannot be used to justify a fourteen-day limit. In fact, of eleven countries surveyed by the NIH with regard to their policies on human embryo research, only four allow research up to fourteen days. Four others have a limit at three to five days, and a limit of seven days has been proposed in two. One prohibits embryo research altogether.

For those who believe that the soul comes into existence at conception—or who reason that the benefit of the doubt concerning the presence of a human person should favor protection of the embryo—embryo research and creation for research have to seem wrong, even a great evil. For Christians, human beings are made in God's image. Anyone who believes or strives to believe that we are imperfect reflections of God will reel at the thought of disposable seed trays of human embryos. Contrarily, many Americans regard the embryo as little more than a conglomeration of insentient cells. They reel at the thought of depriving ourselves of knowledge which might lead to the cure of childhood cancers simply because we need to protect the rights of microscopic embryos, which we otherwise allow to be terminated in IVF clinics. One scientist who has done extensive research on mice and monkeys confided to us that after you have killed a few hundred lab animals, washing chemicals though a pinhead sized organism is not very disturbing. As the abortion debate attests—indeed, as the panel transcripts attest—we are a nation of pluralistic sensibilities.

We would like to register two concerns which ought to resonate with people of good will on both sides of the question. As Neuhaus notes, the panel's recommendations are based upon a cost-benefit analysis which is, of course, an anathema to anyone inclined to accept the personhood of an embryo. However, even accepting the panel's utilitarian approach, it is our view that the costs of embryo research are a bit steeper than the panel has estimated.

Though some scientists are cavalier about the possibility, we believe that when combined with results from the human genome project, human embryo research could lead to a form of trait selection which most Americans find appalling today—though it is true, we might find it otherwise tomorrow, when sufficient benefits are promised. Almost weekly, researchers are claiming to find new markers for genetic defects ranging from cancer to depression, schizophrenia, alcoholism, and homosexuality. For a recent example, the *New York Times* (November 1) reported that defects in the same group of genes may be responsible for many different skeletal disorders. Though none of these disorders is life threatening, they are, to varying degrees, potentially disabling and/or deforming. Should or would parents who were told that their child might bear this handicap choose to have the child? If we remember that this egg may be fertilized in a petri dish, the choice not to have the child does not require an abortion, but "only" the destruction of a "pre-embryo" after a genetic examination. So the decision might be easier to make than you may imagine.

Moreover, in the near future, we will also have the technology to flush a naturally conceived embryo from the uterus in order to examine it for signs of potential genetic defects. Of course, what constitutes a genetic defect may very well vary with the social, political, and economic climate of the times. In the case of parents who carry a gene for a fatal disease, preimplantation diagnosis can be seen as a therapeutic, and perhaps humane, procedure that will in all probability be covered by health insurance. But it doesn't take much imagination to foresee the abuse of this technology by those who can afford

Joan I. Siegel

Arctic Tern

At a certain moment
he lifts himself into the air
and rows under the stars
like a tiny boat
the ocean could break in two.
He doesn't look back
or wonder about God
or death
or whether or not he has a soul
but carries himself forward
day after night
night after day
halfway around the earth
still holding to a certain place
a certain hour of light.

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to pay for it. Indeed, we have spoken with a director of a urban fertility clinic who, while supporting embryo research, was candid enough to acknowledge that there are plenty of people out there looking for the perfect child.

Commendably, the NIH panel expressed deep moral concerns over the possible buying and selling of research gametes and embryos. Unlike procuring sperm, procuring eggs is both a parlous and painful procedure, and even if there is no payment for the egg, per se, it is certainly reasonable to reimburse the donor for all she must endure. As the panel recognizes, the gamete market is already highly commercialized, with a Ivy League woman being offered upwards of $2,000 for her participation in an egg-donor program. College-age woman are routinely solicited for such donations. Nevertheless, since the true market value of the egg may be much higher, $2,000 for her time and trouble is well within the level of compensation permitted by federal regulations governing human subjects research. But as professionals in this business have admitted to us, the distinction between paying for one's participation or for one's egg is merely linguistic. In either case, the woman is $2,000 richer than she was to start with, and for many that is hardly an insignificant sum.

It seems that we can not answer the question as to whether or not to publicly fund research on protohumans without deciding both for ourselves and future generations what it means to be a person. By leaving this question to a panel of experts, we as a people are saying something about ourselves that we may not want to hear. □

A MODEST PROPOSAL

A BABY BY ANY OTHER NAME

ISHMAEL LAW

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is considering a proposal to beget human lab animals, provided they are destroyed before they reach a certain age. Fourteen days is the age they have selected. They call these very young objects of research *pre-implantation embryos*. The term is unfamiliar. Over the years the NIH has labored to find appropriate words to designate humans that they would like to study, so to speak, beyond the ordinary limits. Now they have come up with "pre-implantation embryos."

Justice Harry Blackmun, in *Roe* v. *Wade* and *Doe* v. *Bolton* (1973), had to cite many legal sources and medical documents; they referred to *the child*. When Blackmun spoke for the Supreme Court, he carefully avoided any such reference. Instead he spoke of the *embyro*, or the *fetus*, or the *unborn*. When references obliged him to refer to the unborn *person*, however, he placed that word at arm's length by using quotation marks—"*person*."

Person, after all, was the constitutional status that had been claimed by so many groups to end their treatment as inferior categories of human being: slaves, free blacks, the landless, women, Indians. "No Person shall be deprived...." Since the Court in 1973 was removing from the unborn all protection of law, it needed to remove all protection of sentiment as well. This was so radical an innovation that Blackmun understandably but heedlessly referred to *the mother* throughout the decision.

No one is perfect. Most journals and newspapers discipline their usage with style sheets. Most news media imposed "*fetus*" years ago as the only permissible reference to the newly disposable unborn, and *woman* as its bearer. Of course, the rule always breaks down in the articles on prenatal care, because you can't coach pregnant mothers into talking about their *fetuses*. They always use the *B*-word.

A few years after *Roe* and *Doe*, scientists wanted access to these younglings slated for abortion, especially if they could be kept alive for a while after the abortion in order to be used for research. As long as they could use Blackmun's all-purpose *fetus* word all would be well, for since 1973, one could do whatever one wished with a *fetus*. What was wanted was to get those little bodies out of the womb alive and work on them in the lab, and so a federal commission began talking about a *fetus ex utero*: a *fetus outside the womb*. Even folks who never read *Dorland's Illustrated Medical Dictionary* knew that this was weird. A fetus who emerges living from the womb is instantly a *baby*.

The current NIH Human Embryo Research Panel uses several other turns of phrase to legitimize an unrestricted period in the earliest days of life when a human being is disposable. *Fetus* won't work anymore, so they speak of the *fertilized ovum*. That sounds so small and undeveloped as to be insignificant. But an ovum, as the panelists and their educated readers know, is an ovum only until the moment it is fertilized. After that it is a human being in the zygote stage of his or her embryonic life. The concept of a *fertilized ovum* is as conflicted as a *convex basketball*.

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The NIH panel also speaks of the *pre-embryo*. But the only thing *pre-* an *embryo* has is a sperm or an egg. And those are not what the scientists want to get their hands on. This is all word-play intended to render the youngest humans morally negligible and politically expendable.

The fact is that the NIH wants to pay scientists to breed human beings for use as laboratory animals. They are aware of some public reluctance to allow humans to be begotten alongside rodents and fruit-flies, used for research, and then, as they say in the lab, "sacrificed." Mind you, the NIH is not careless about laboratory animals. The laws and regulations governing their care run to a thousand pages, and their housing costs about four times as much per square foot as decent faculty offices. Still, the human hamster is going to be difficult to sell politically.

In its report, the panel acknowledges that the very young embryo *merits moral respect as a developing form of human life*. But a cancer is a developing form of human life and merits no respect at all. What commands our respect and protection is not human life, but living human beings.

In a bold stroke, the panel finally turns from word-craft to embrace an eccentric theory devised by its theologian member. No *human being*, we are told, qualifies for moral recognition and social protection as a *person* just by being a human being. To accredit humans as *persons, we* who award that status have to calculate, not simply who or what *they* are, but how much of a burden they are going to be, and whether *our best interests* are served by declaring *them* protectable. With this "theology" no more bioethicspeak will be needed. *We* balance the fact that *they*—these human beings—are really too little to know or to feel what *we* are doing to *them*, against the important genetic discoveries *they* might make possible for *us*. At this point the calculus becomes easy: on balance *we* have *moral respect* for *them*, but *more moral respect* for what *we* can gain from *them*.

Of course, this is not entirely innovative. It comes down to the same *us* deciding what the same *they* is worth—to *us*. The syphilitic blacks at Tuskegee; the lethally irradiated soldiers at Ground Zero; the retarded children injected with hepatitis at Willowbrook; the Filipino convicts infected with the plague by U.S. doctors; they were all unfortunately *they*, and the prevailing moral calculus didn't award *them* enough *moral respect*.

The precise issue to be decided this December at the NIH, of course, is not whether making human hamsters is moral or legal. The NIH is equally incompetent in both those disciplines. They will decide whether to fund such research. And they will probably say yes.

But I offer a modest proposal.

This panel report will not abate the widespread distrust in what the NIH, in its conflict of interest, calls moral inquiry. I propose that in order to sidestep even the suspicion of exploitation, all scientists funded to beget and use embryonic human beings for research voluntarily agree to use only embryos whom they themselves have sired or conceived, *in vivo* or *in vitro*, with their mate as co-parent—all of this done, it is understood, with *moral respect, profound respect*, but not *undue respect*. To a mistrustful public, to an embarrassed NIH, even to their other children, these truth-seeking researchers can then take deserved pride in the fact that they will not have asked of others what they themselves were not ready to give. □

SCREEN

IN THE KINGDOM OF CRANKS

'ED WOOD' & 'ROAD TO WELLVILLE'

America, being the Emersonian land of self-reliance and self-invention, is also a nurturer of spectacular cranks. Think of Brook Farm and Oneida, Bronson Alcott and Aimee Semple McPherson, Christian Science and Scientology. And cranks have always been charming fixtures in the supporting casts of American movies, especially comedies. But, in the last two decades, as American films have become more freewheeling and kooky, cranks have often been the protagonists of Hollywood scripts rather than subordinate characters. And their crankishness often turns out to be justified. What is Warren Beatty as *Bugsy* but a visionary among thugs, and isn't the glorified Jim Garrison of *J.F.K.* a would-be savior of his country?

Now, two minor, eccentric movies give us two more real-life cranks as their heroes.

Ed Wood is the story of Hollywood's worst director, the man who gave us the sci-fi dud of duds, *Plan Nine from Outer Space* and the transvestite atrocity, *Glen or Glenda?*, ineptitudes so klutzily personal that their maker has become a pillar in the pantheon of camp. Tim Burton's film treats Wood as a sweet simpleton who cannot see his own transvestism as weird or his own lack of talent as anything other than originality. As portrayed in this film, Wood is the patron saint of all who choose to do their "own thing" in the teeth of convention, tradition, or accepted good taste. An Emersonian hero of B flicks.

Ed Wood displays the three most salient qualities of Tim Burton's previous work (the Batman movies, *Beetlejuice, Edward Scissorhands*): his visual skill; his unshakably sweet nature; and his fundamental disdain for, or indifference to, truly dramatic storytelling.

First, Burton's skill. Ed Wood had no real visual flair, but he revered the great stylist Orson Welles for his stubborn individualism in the face of studio pressure. Accordingly, Burton and his cinematographer have created a black-and-white look that miraculously echoes both the underlit, cheesy appearance of Wood's output and the glorious expressionism of *Citizen Kane*. Somehow, Burton keeps the two styles from colliding, partly by never allowing either to dominate for too long a time. And, for *Ed Wood*'s big moments, the Wellesian texture rightly prevails. For instance, when Ed runs down the aisle of the theater that's about to premier his latest bomb, the choreography mimics Kane's run into his newspaper office upon his

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return from Europe. But whereas Kane is hailed by his adoring staff, Ed's arrival is booed and hissed by a mob of juvenile delinquents. The glory of the A's has become the humiliation of the B's.

Burton's sweetness is evident in his depiction of the bond between Wood and Bela Lugosi, dope-addicted and semi-crazy in the last years of his life. It's a loving, mutually parasitic relationship in which the old has-been depends on the young producer for roles, income, and a sympathetic ear, while Wood needs Lugosi's name on his credits to entice investors, but shows real compassion for the fallen star. Delivering the only performance of distinction in this movie, Martin Landau endows Lugosi with ruined theatrical magnificence, Central European *gemütlichkeit*, and doped-up, boozed-out misery. Because of Landau's performance, the several close-ups of the hypodermic tracks on Lugosi's arms aren't merely disgusting but also redolent of pitiable mortality.

But now the down side. *Ed Wood*, for all its charm, is ample proof that Burton can't shape a story to any real dramatic purpose, isn't interested in character development, and can't bring his narrative to a true climax. Ed has a few moments of doubt about his abilities after his first fiasco, dismisses them, doubts himself again after the next bomb, revives, and so it goes. The structure of this movie is a seesaw, not a mountain climb. Our hero's meeting with Orson Welles in which the great man tells Wood to follow his dream against all odds, is meant to be the story's dramatic peak but only reenforces our perception of Ed as a freak of fatuousness.

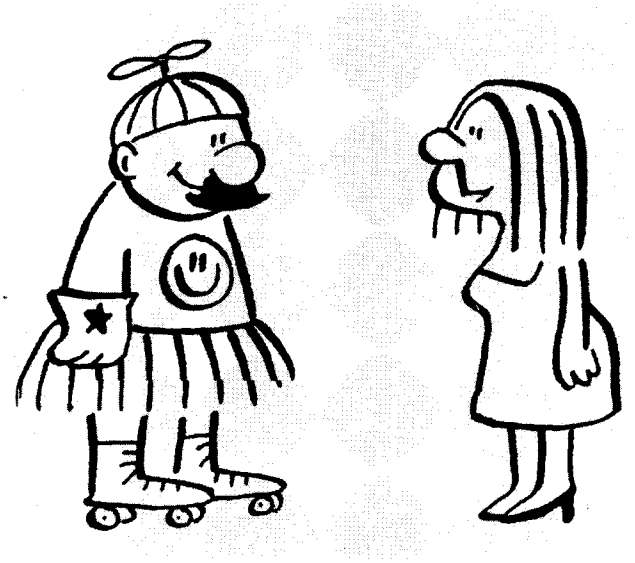
Locked into this fatuousness is Johnny Depp, a game actor. He has been allowed (or forced?) by his director to wear an idiotic rictus of a smile from first shot to final credits. This smile embalms Depp's performance.

Jonathan Swift's genius for satire was fueled by his disgust for humanity, and that disgust had one source in his revulsion from, and fascination with, bodily functions. Similar revulsion and fascination permeate *The Road to Wellville*, but certainly haven't resulted in a satire of Swiftian brilliance.

Set at the nineteenth-century Battle Creek health spa of the vegetarian crusader and antisex fanatic, Dr. John Kellogg, this T. Coraghessan Boyle story is composed of three plot strands: the marital woes of Bridget Fonda and Mathew Broderick, which Fonda believes will be cured by Kellogg's regimen; a con man's plot to use Kellogg's recipe for corn flakes to make a rival product; and the enmity between the doctor (Anthony Hopkins) and his adopted son (Dana Carvey). I don't know what Boyle made of these situations in his novel, but they go absolutely nowhere in this Alan Parker adaptation. The most interesting one, the Hopkins-Carvey conflict, is resolved by a cuddle and kiss. (This, after Kellogg, Jr., blows his foster father's establishment to kingdom come!)

It's easy to see the satirical point of *The Road to Wellville*. It's the same point made nonsatirically by Oliver Sacks in his chapter on the drug L-DOPA in his book, *Awakenings*:

> ...the delusions of vitalism or materialism, the notion that "health," "well-being," "happiness," etc., can be reduced to certain "factors" or "elements"—principles, fluids, humors, commodities—*things* which can be measured and weighed, bought and sold....The fraudulent reduction comes from alchemists, witch-doctors, and their modern equivalents, and from patients who long *at all costs* to be well.



"You're not like the others, Alan."

Thus, in this movie, Dr. Kellogg: "The bowels are our passage to health!" But, once this point is made in the first fifteen minutes, Alan Parker can't develop it, only elaborate and overelaborate on it. All story developments, most characterizations, all social observation and historical insight are overwhelmed by Parker's obsessive need to gross out the audience. Viewers are treated to scenes of vomiting, enema insertion, clitoral massage, farting, masturbation (female variety) on a bicycle, masturbation (male variety) within a kind of electronic jock strap, and much examination of feces. I know that Alan Parker began his career in the late sixties and has made at least a dozen movies (three of them—*Fame, Shoot the Moon*, and *The Commitments*—excellent). But his latest film prompts just one question: Is Alan Parker fourteen years old?

Anthony Hopkins emerges with credit, not his usual glory. His characterization is a triumph of physical transformation: a Bugs Bunny grin, a Teddy Roosevelt stance, a voice trapped and roaring in the adenoid—you've never seen *this* Anthony Hopkins before. But, I'm afraid, once the lights come up and the final credits roll, you don't continue seeing him in your mind's eye. It's an artfully crafted performance but lacks resonance.

To be sure, no actor can completely survive a director who has lost all perspective on his own material. The tooth-sucking self-satisfaction that Anthony Hopkins quite rightly projects as Kellogg's is also, I'm afraid, the most salient quality of this movie. While making a film about a supreme crank, Alan Parker apparently turned into one.

RICHARD ALLEVA

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Critics' choices for Christmas

Sara Maitland

Sara Maitland, a novelist and theologian, lives in Kettering, England. Her most recent novel is Ancestral Truths *(Henry Holt).*

Easily the most pleasurable and interesting book I have read this year has been Roberto Calasso's *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* (Vintage, $13, 391 pp.), an extraordinarily beautiful, sexy, engaging, and intelligent retelling of the Greek myths. They are still all around us, these ancient stories—in the naming of the planets, and so many of the stars; in the wailing of police sirens and the agony of torn Achilles tendons; in art and literature; in liturgy; in the discourse of psychoanalysis and in the structures of our imaginations. We fail to recognize them to our very great loss. How much, for instance, might Mary—and the great virgin martyrs of the Christian tradition—be restored to women if we understood better the fierce, wild power of the Greek virgin goddesses; the sense of belonging to oneself alone which had nothing to do with "abstaining" from sex? In these stories we can encounter a world in which sexuality, in its most diverse forms, is respected, even loved, without being slavishly worshiped.

At the same time we need to have them retold, remembered, revitalized for our own time and Calasso has done it. He has found a language so fabulous that it feels inevitable and a multilayered structure that perfectly reflects the sense of change, fluidity, uncertainty, metamorphosis which is the stuff of this body of tales. He has entered into a long tradition, paying proper debts to Ovid and Homer, without any subservience or loss of his own voice. What this book must be like in the Italian original I hardly dare think, but Calasso is, I must suspect, well served by his translator Tim Parks, for the whole book reads richly, sinuously, and naturally.

The book itself then is a delight, but more—it made me think. Why isn't contemporary Christianity producing texts like this? Our stories are as good and as culturally pervasive. Calasso says of his tales: "These things have never happened, but they are always." Why are we Christians so conspicuously failing to find a language, a grasp on our own tradition, which would enable us to say the same only better: "These things have happened *and* they are always"? Why are we rendered anxious and irritable by the psychological depths of imaginative and emotionally engaged faith? Why are we so patently terrified of Mary's virginity, of angels, and of miracles?

Is it, I wondered, impossible to make mythopoetic narratives out of ideas that you believe to be true? But neither Dante nor Milton had any such problem. It is we, in the twentieth century, who have a problem. We have given too much ground to the demythologizers; we seem to desire a stripped-down, hard-nosed faith, and an ugly, contentious theology. One of the dangers is that we will lose the ability to be nourished by myth—by the deep stories, the beautiful, the magical, and the symbolic. "'Tis we, 'tis our estranged faces that miss the many-splendored thing."

I do actually suspect that *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony* may turn out to be one of the great texts of the twentieth century: that its claim to our attention cannot be vaunted too highly and that it is lovely and sexy just in itself as well as driven forward by an enormous poetic intelligence. But I think too that it throws down a particular gauntlet to theologians, liturgists, and any who want their religious convictions to be a "faith for the whole person"—why is our hagiography so sparse? our sense of mystery so diluted? Where is the artful theology that can make the sort of claims that Calasso not merely makes but delivers on? I think this book cannot fail but deepen our understanding of what the mythological really is, how it is a necessary part of what it is to be fully human. It cannot fail but make us long for the deepening of our own imaginations and the retelling, remythologizing of our own stories.

For not dissimilar reasons I have also been inspired and empowered by the work of the more contemporary mythologizers—the scientists. Paul Davies—the professor of natural philosophy (a new chair created especially for him) at the University of Adelaide—writes wonderfully for the lay scientist: *The Mind of God* (Touchstone, $12, 254 pp.) and most recently *The Last Three Minutes* (Basic Books, $20, 162 pp.) are books that raise all the right questions and deepen our sense of living in a vastly complex, strange, and beautiful universe. At the other end of the scale, *The Encyclopedia of Land Invertebrate Behavior*

(Continued on page 24)

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MIRRORS AND WINDOWS: SEEING THE HUMAN FAMILY

Books for Children and Young Adults

The following recommended books for children and young adults were selected by a committee of experts in the field of literature for youth. These books were chosen because they portray people of different ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds in a way that affirms and celebrates the full range of diversity found in America and the world. The titles included here were published during 1993 and 1994.

All the Places to Love, *by Patricia MacLachlan. Illustrated by Mike Wimmer. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-021098-2 $15*

The Newbery-Medal winning author of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* beautifully describes the interaction of one generation on another as a boy grows up on an American farm. The warmth and nostalgia of the text are fully captured through handsome, vivid paintings of an enviable childhood. Early Childhood

Alvin Ailey, *by Andrea Davis Pinkney. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. Hyperion Books for Children. New York, 1993. ISBN: 1-56282-414-7 $13.95*

With the swaying rhythm of jazz dance, Brian Pinkney's illustrations capture the highlights of the late choreographer's life—from his early days in 1940s Los Angeles, influenced by the style of Katherine Dunham, to his founding of the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in New York. Primary

Amelia's Road, *by Linda Jacobs Altman. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee and Low. New York, 1993. ISBN: 1-880000-04-0 $14.95*

An illustrated story about Amelia, the young daughter of migrant farm workers. Although she longs for the permanent home her family does not have, she finds a way to create a special place for herself and fills it with the things that give her a sense of belonging. Primary

An American Brat, *by Bapsi Sidhwa. Milkweed. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-915943-73-5 $21.95*

Feroza, a Pakistani teen-ager, visits her young uncle, a Harvard student. She decides that life in the United States is fine and enrolls in a Western college where she learns that student life and romance are not what she knew in Pakistan. Secondary

Be Good to Eddie Lee, *by Virginia Fleming. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Philomel, a division of The Putnam and Grosset Group. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-399-21993-5 $14.95*

Eddie Lee, a boy with Down's syndrome, is first shunned by Jim, Bud, and Christy, but his eagerness and sense of discovery on a hike in the woods bring the three together.
Early Childhood & Primary

Bein' with You this Way, *by W. Nikola-Lisa. Lee and Low. New York, 1994. ISBN: 1-880-00005-9 $14.95*

This playground rap introduces young readers to how people are different yet the same. Early Childhood

Black Diamond, *by Patricia C. McKissack & Fredrick C. McKissack, Jr. Scholastic. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-590-45809-4 $13.95*

Baseball was never just a game, and for much of its history it was segregated like the rest of American society. Patricia McKissack and her son Fredrick McKissack, Jr., give a well-documented and well-illustrated account of this little-known part

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of the history of the Great American Pastime. Satchel Paige, Jackie Robinson, and other Hall of Famers and unsung heroes all come vividly to life in one of the best sports books in years.
Intermediate and Secondary

The Bracelet, *by Yoshiko Uchida. Illustrated by Joanna Yardley. Philomel Books, a division of the Putnam & Grosset Group. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-39-922503-X $14.95*

When Emi's family is forced to move during World War II from their safe, secure home into a converted horse stall at a Japanese-American internment camp, she carries with her a bracelet from her best friend. Despite her solemn vow to always keep the precious gift, Emi loses it and worries she will forget her friend. Her mother wisely reassures her that she will always carry Laurie in her heart. Primary

Brown Angels, *by Walter Dean Myers. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-022917-9 $16*

Charming short poems describe and identify the beautiful brown babies in this lovely album—a paean to childhood.
Primary

Brown Honey in Broomwheat Tea, *by Joyce Carol Thomas. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-021097-7 $15*

Sensitive poetry and warm paintings evoke the dreams, joys, and bittersweet memories of a young African-American girl.
Primary

Bull Run, *by Paul Fleischman. Woodcuts by David Frampton. A Laura Gerlinger Book/HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-021446-5 $14*

Readers witness the first battle of Bull Run through the eyes of sixteen different individuals who experienced the fighting in one way or another. The sights, sounds, smells, and emotions of the battle are briefly, but intensely described by generals, children, soldiers, slaves, sisters, and mothers and others—from North and South. This account vividly conveys the concept of multiple perspectives in the study of history. Intermediate

The Car Washing Street, *by Denise Lewis Patrick. Illustrated by John Ward. Tambourine Books. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-11452-0 $14*

There is a strong sense of community on this city street as Matthew and his daddy join their neighbors in washing their cars.
Early Childhood

Chinese American Family Album, *by Dorothy & Thomas Hoobler. Introduction by Bette Bao Lord. Oxford University Press (American Family Album). New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-19-509123-X $19.95*

This easy-to-understand overview of the immigrant experience of Chinese-Americans and some of their unique contributions to the United States includes anecdotes, oral history segments, and fascinating photographs. Intermediate

Selected by...
Janet Austin, Media Specialist/Librarian, Clifton High School, Clifton, New Jersey
Joseph Benkovitz, Librarian, Springfield Gardens High School, New York
Yolanda Bonitch, Community Specialist, The New York Public Library, New York
Consuelo Harris, Head of the Main Children's Department, Library of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
Michael Patrick Hearn, Author, Critic, Teacher, Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts
Marjorie Lewis, Author, Critic, School Library Media Specialist, Heathcote Schools, Scarsdale, New York
Ellen V. LiBretto, Young Adult Consultant, Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, New York
Karlan Sick, Young Adult Specialist, The New York Public Library, Bronx, New York
Mary Jane Tacchi, Assistant Coordinator, Young Adult Services, The New York Public Library, New York
Judy Zuckerman, Children's Specialist, The New York Public Library, Bronx, New York

Crazy Lady, *by Jane Leslie Conly. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-021357-4 $13*

An alcohol-impaired mother and her mentally disabled son are teased by Vernon and the other neighborhood boys until Vernon meets them in a different way when the mother becomes his tutor. This powerful book explores complex themes with gritty realism. Intermediate and Secondary

Down Buttermilk Lane, *By Barbara Mitchell. Illustrated by John Sandford. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-10114-3 $15*

On a bright, glowing October morning, an Amish family sets off in their buggy "down Buttermilk Lane" for a trip into the village for a day of errands and visits. This vignette is fully expanded by detailed oil paintings that chronicle life among the Old Order Amish of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
Early Childhood

Dragon's Gate, *by Laurence Yep. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-022971-3 $15*

When Otter flees China to join his father and uncle, who are working in "the land of the Golden Mountain" on the transcontinental railroad, his dreams of bringing American know-how back to China to free his people from the harsh tyranny of the Manchus are shattered. The brutality of railroad workers' lives and what it does to the lives of the men who work in those con-

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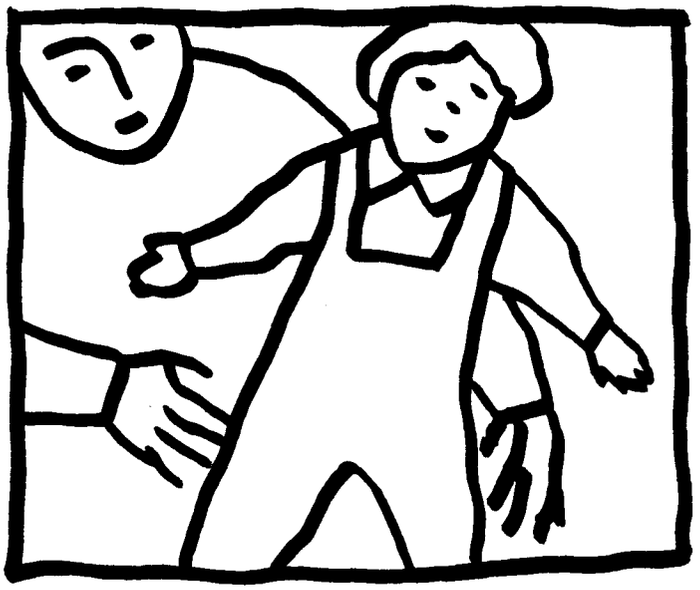

ditions threaten to destroy Otter until his own intelligence, spirit, and bravery show him a way to rebuild his dreams.
Intermediate

Dumpling Soup, *by Jama Kim Rattigan. Illustrated by Lillian Hsu-Flanders. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-316-73445-4 $15.95*

Marisa, a young Hawaiian girl, tries to make dumplings for the family's New Year's celebration. A warm family feeling dominates the lyrical watercolor illustrations with a text punctuated with words from several languages spoken in Hawaii.
Early Childhood.

Eleanor Roosevelt: A Life of Discovery, *by Russell Freedman. Clarion. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-89919-862-7 $17.95*

This Newbery Honor book chronicles the life of one of the most influential women of our time. Eleanor Roosevelt's extraordinary life is a model of perseverance, integrity, and concern for others. Intermediate and Secondary

Escape from Egypt, *by Sonia Levitin. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1994. ISBN: 0-316-52273-2 $15.95*

The familiar story of Moses leading his people out of Egypt takes on new life when it focuses on the family of Jesse, a Hebrew slave, and Jennat, a half-Egyptian, half-Syrian girl. As the plot follows the biblical Exodus, Jesse is torn not only by Moses's demands on his followers but also between his love for Jennat and his family's desire for him to marry a cousin.
Intermediate and Secondary

First Houses: Native American Homes and Sacred Structures, *by Jean Guard Monroe and Ray A. Williamson. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-51081-3 $14.95*

This collection of Native American legends associated with houses and sacred structures is a source of endless fascination. It illuminates both the past and present of a variety of native peoples. Intermediate

For the Life of Laetitia, *by Merle Hodge. Farrar Straus & Giroux. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-374-32447-6 $15*

Lacey leaves the familiarity and comfort of her Caribbean village to attend school where she faces pressure from her demanding father and prejudiced teachers. Intermediate

Fox Song, *by Joseph Bruchac. Illustrated by Paul Morin. Philomel Books, a division of the Putnam & Grosset Group. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-399-22346-0 $14.95*

Inspired by a story from his own family, Joseph Bruchac tells about Jamie, an Abenaki Indian girl, and her close relationship with her grandmother who teaches her how to make baskets from birch bark and how to hunt for the winter tracks of Wokwses, the Fox. Every moment they spend together opens a new world to Jamie in this beautifully illustrated picture book.
Primary

Freak the Mighty, *by Rodman Philbrick. Blue Sky/Scholastic. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-59-047412-X $13.95*

Dubbing themselves "Freak the Mighty," Max and his new friend Kevin combine their brains and brawn to compensate for their deficiencies and combat forces not willing to accept their differences. Max and Kevin join forces to slay dragons and fight battles in both imaginary and real worlds. At the end, Max is able to do as Kevin challenged, tell the story of Freak the Mighty. Intermediate

From Miss Ida's Porch, *by Sandra Belton. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Four Winds. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-02-708915-0 $14.95*

From Miss Ida's porch come stories of excitement, history, pain, and pleasure as family and neighbors gather in the twilight time to share wonderful memories. The children drift in from their summer games to hear the stories and feel a strong sense of love and well-being. An excellent blend of story and fact, with paintings that capture the warmth of place and people. Primary

From Sea to Shining Sea, *compiled by Amy L. Cohn. Illustrated by Caldecott Award artists. Scholastic Inc. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-590-42868-3 $29.95*

A treasury of diversity—biographical excerpts, songs, stories, and poetry about America, gorgeously illustrated by a variety of Caldecott Award winners. Primary

The Gift of Changing Woman, *by Tryntje Van Ness Seymour. Henry Holt & Co. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-8050-2577-4 $16.95*

The Gift of Changing Woman ceremony is the Apache girl's coming-of-age ritual. During four days of special dances and prayers,

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a chosen girl reenacts the Apache story of creation. Full color paintings by Apache artists along with comments by tribal members let us see the ceremony through Apache eyes. This is a unique work that will foster respect, understanding, and appreciation for the Apache culture. Intermediate and Secondary

Grandfather's Journey, *by Allen Say. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-57035-2 $16.95*

This poignant story of two generations in a Japanese-American family is based on the artist's own life. Tenderly illustrated with masterful full-page paintings. Early Childhood & Primary

The Great Migration, *by Jacob Lawrence. Illustrated by the author. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-023037-1 $18*

The powerful story of African-American migration from the South to the North in search of work in a free society is illustrated with paintings by one of the country's most famous contemporary artists. Primary

Growing up Asian-American, *edited by Maria Hong, foreword by Stephen Sunida. William Morrow. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-11266-8 $22.50*

Thirty-two authors, among them Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston, tell in fiction and essays of the coming-of-age of Asian-Americans from the nineteenth century to the present. Secondary

Growing up Gay/Growing up Lesbian, *edited by Bennett L. Singer. New Press. New York, 1994. ISBN: 1-565-84103-4 $9.95*

With a foreword by Martina Navratilova, this anthology includes excerpts from noted gay and lesbian authors such as James Baldwin, Tennessee Williams, and Rita Mae Brown, as well as journal entries and essays by contemporary gay and lesbian teens. The admirably diverse contributions are arranged according to theme: Self-Discovery, Friendships/Relationships, Family, Facing the World. Secondary

Growing up Native American, *edited by Patricia Riley, foreword by Inés Hernandez. William Morrow. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-11850-X $22.50*

This anthology of Native American writings about childhood reflects both the commonality and diversity of the Native American community. The collection includes contributions from the most accomplished contemporary Native American writers, including Louise Erdrich, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Pulitzer Prize winner N. Scott Momaday. Secondary

Halmoni and the Picnic, *by Sook Nyul Choi. Illustrated by Karen M. Dugan. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-39-561626-3 $14.95*

Yunmi would love to have her grandmother, Halmoni, chaperone the class picnic to Central Park, but she worries that her classmates might laugh at her rubber shoes and long Korean dress. Not only did Halmoni say "yes," she packed a picnic basket with a very distinctive lunch. Everyone relishes the lunch and invites Halmoni to next year's picnic. The art work gives intimate glimpses into the life of this Korean-American family. Primary

Hero of Lesser Causes, *by Julie Johnston. Little Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-316-46988-2 $14.95*

After twelve-year-old Keely's beloved older brother Patrick contracts polio and is almost completely paralyzed, Keely focuses her energy and imagination on reawakening her brother's interest in life. Set in 1946 in a small town outside Ottawa, their story is full of action, tragedy, and humor. Intermediate

The Hidden Children, *by Howard Greenfeld. Ticknor and Fields. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-66074-2 $15.95*

In order to survive, Jewish children had to go into hiding from the Nazis during the Second World War. Greenfeld has spoken to survivors now living in the U.S. who share their experience of being a Jewish child during that time. Intermediate and Secondary

How the Sea Began: A Taino Myth, *by George Crespo. Clarion. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-63033-9 $14.95*

The retelling of a creation myth of the Taino people, the original inhabitants of Puerto Rico, as collected by Fray Ramon Pane almost 500 years ago. The beautiful, vivid illustrations were painted in oils on rag paper and are a fitting accompaniment to the story. Primary

I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This, *by Jacqueline Woodson. Delacorte. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-553-08976-5 $14.95*

Marie, from a prosperous African-American community in Ohio, finds herself drawn into unlikely friendship with Lena, a new girl in school who lives in the poor white section of town. Both girls have recently lost their mothers. Despite prejudice at home and school their trust grows, and Lena reveals that her father is sexually abusing her. A powerful and beautifully written story which provides no easy answers to their problems. Intermediate

Iblis, *retold by Shulamith Levey Oppenheim. Illustrated by Ed Young. Harcourt Brace. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-15-238016-7 $15.95*

A richly illustrated retelling of the Islamic version of the Adam and Eve story. Oppenheim draws from the work of ninth-century Islamic scholar, Jarir at-Tabari. Early Childhood

If It Hadn't Been for Yoon Jun, *by Marie G. Lee. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-62941-1 $13.95*

The story of Alice, a young Korean girl adopted into a white

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family in Minnesota. When Yoon Jun, a newly arrived Korean boy, moves to town, Alice struggles with questions of cultural identity and assimilation. Intermediate

Italian-American Family Album, *by Dorothy & Thomas Hoobler. Introduction by Mario Cuomo. Oxford University Press (American Family Album). New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-19-509124-8 $19.95*

This easy-to-understand overview of the immigrant experience of Italian-Americans and some of their unique contributions to the United States includes anecdotes, oral history segments, and fascinating photographs. Intermediate

It's Our World, Too!: Stories of Young People Who Are Making a Difference, *by Philip M. Hoose. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-316-37241-2 $15.95*

This rich collection of empowering stories provides models for young people across the world. It both instructs and inspires. Intermediate

Jacob's Rescue: A Holocaust Story, *by Malka Drucker and Michael Halperin. Bantam. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-553-08976-5 $15*

One Passover, Marissa hears the story of her father Jacob and her Uncle David's childhood in Warsaw during the Holocaust, and how they were hidden in the home of a non-Jewish Polish couple, Alex and Mela. After the war the boys must leave the couple they now regard as their parents, not to see them again for sixteen years. A heartwarming tale of courage based on a true story. Primary

Jamaica and Brianna, *by Juanita Havill. Illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0395-64489-5 $13.95*

Jamaica and Brianna are best friends. But friction occurs when Jamaica is forced to wear her brother's ugly grey boots when Brianna has beautiful pink fuzzy topped boots. The friendship resumes when Jamaica discovers Brianna's boots are also hand-me-downs. Illustrations complement the text. Early Childhood

James Baldwin, *by Randall Kenan. Chelsea House. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-7910-2876-3 $19.95 (hardcover), $9.95 (paperback)*

In this first volume of the Chelsea House series, "Lives of Notable Gay Men and Lesbians," award-winning novelist Randall Kenan chronicles the remarkable journey of one of the country's most acclaimed twentieth-century writers. Secondary

Kinaalda: A Navajo Girl Grows Up, *by Monty Roessel. Photographs by the author. Lerner Publications. Minneapolis, 1993. ISBN: 0-8225-2655-7 $14.96 (hard cover); ISBN: 0-8225-9641-5 $6.95 (paperback)*

Readers are given an inside look at the traditional coming-of-age ceremony of a Navajo girl, Celinda McKelvey. The two-day celebration includes rituals, prayers and blessings, feasting, and running. Surrounded and supported by her family, this girl accomplishes the tasks and learns what it means to be a Navajo woman. The beautiful photographs enliven the events. Primary and Intermediate

Knoxville, Tennessee, *by Nikki Giovanni. Illustrated by Larry Johnson. Scholastic Inc. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-590-47074-4 $14.95*

This illustrated poem by Nikki Giovanni celebrates the joys of summer, good food, picnics, music, friends and family in an African-American community in the South. Early Childhood

Make Lemonade, *by Virginia Euwer Wolff. Henry Holt. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-8050-2228-7 $15.95*

The friendship between Jolly, a single teen-age mother with two small children, and LaVaughn, Jolly's college-bound babysitter, helps Jolly dare to dream that she can make a success of her life. Intermediate and Secondary

Mayfield Crossing, *by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson. Illustrated by Leonard Jenkins. Putnam. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-399-22331-2 $14.95*

When their rural Mayfield school is closed, Meg and her friends are sent to the larger Parkview School. It is 1960, and the new students, especially the African-Americans, are taunted in the classroom and on the baseball field. The Mayfield friends stick together and challenge the Parkviewers to a baseball game, thus strengthening their respect for themselves and winning the respect of their new schoolmates. Primary

Meet Danitra Brown, *by Nikki Grimes. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-688-12073-3 $15*

Zuri Jackson thinks her best friend Danitra Brown is "the most splendiferous girl in town." The sometimes funny, sometimes poignant poems and drawings of this splendiferous picture book show that there is much more to life in an urban African-American community than what gets on the evening news. Primary

Miriam's Well, *by Lois Ruby. Scholastic. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-590-44937-0 $13.95*

When Adam, a Jewish boy with many friends, is assigned to an English project with Miriam, a member of a strict Christian group, he is sorry but tries his best to be nice. One day Miriam collapses suddenly, so he and his girlfriend take her to the hospital where he finds himself caught in a dispute between the religious leaders and the doctors and realizes that he really cares for Miriam. Intermediate & Secondary

My Name is Maria Isabel, *by Alma Flor Ada. Illustrated by K. Dyble Thompson. Translated by Ana M. Cerro, Simon and Schuster. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-689-31517-1 $12.95*

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On Maria Isabel's first day at her new school, the teacher decides to call her Mary because there are two other Marias in the class. Maria Isabel forgets to answer to the new name and becomes frustrated and discouraged. Eventually the teacher understands the reason for the girl's sadness through her essay on "My Greatest Wish," and Maria is able to reclaim her name, culture, and identity. Illustrated with occasional pencil drawings.
Primary

My Song is Beautiful: Poems and Pictures in Many Voices, *selected by Mary Ann Hoberman. Illustrated by Andrea Arroyo, Ashley Bryan, Elisa Kleven, and others. Little, Brown and Co., 1994. ISBN: 0-316-36738-9 $15.95*

The well-known children's poet and anthologist has pulled together this fine introduction to poetry that shows the multiplicity of childhood thoughts and dreams. There are traditional Toltec and Chippewa poems, along with selections by A. A. Milne, Nikki Giovanni, Langston Hughes, and others. Each verse is illustrated by a different artist in media reflecting various cultures.
Primary

The Open Boat, *edited by Harriett Hongo. Anchor Books. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-385-42338-1 $12*

The poems in this powerful contemporary anthology come from thirty-one Asian-Americans who represent immigrant cultures from India to Japan. Secondary

The Outside Dog, *by Charlotte Pomerantz. Illustrated by Jennifer Plecas. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-024782-7 $14*

This is a book in the "I Can Read" series, and children who read this charming story about a girl who wants a dog will learn some words in Spanish. Marisol's grandfather would rather the stray pooch stay outside the house, but the dog wins him over.
Early Childhood

Pass It On: African-American Poetry for Children, *selected by Wade Hudson. Illustrated by Floyd Cooper. Scholastic. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-590-45770-5 $14.95*

This inspiring and attractive collection of poetry includes contributions from Countee Cullen, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Lucille Clifton, and others. Early Childhood and Primary

Pearl Moscowitz's Last Stand, *by Artur A. Levine. Illustrated by Robert Roth. Tambourine Books. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-10753-2 $14*

Pearl Moscowitz takes a stand when the city government tries to chop down the last gingko tree on her street. Throughout the years this street has been the home of many different cultures, each of which has brought special flavors to the neighborhood.
Early Childhood

Perseverance and Leadership *(African-Americans: Voices of Triumph Series) Time-Life. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-7835-2250-9LC and 0-7835-2254-1LC $29.95 each*

These two volumes on the African-American experience take the reader across the centuries and from Africa to America as a people's past and future unfold. Through colorful drawings, historic photographs, and lively text, we see the many ways African-Americans have survived and triumphed.
Intermediate

Picking up the Pieces, *by Patricia Calvert. Scribners. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-684-19558-5 $14.95*

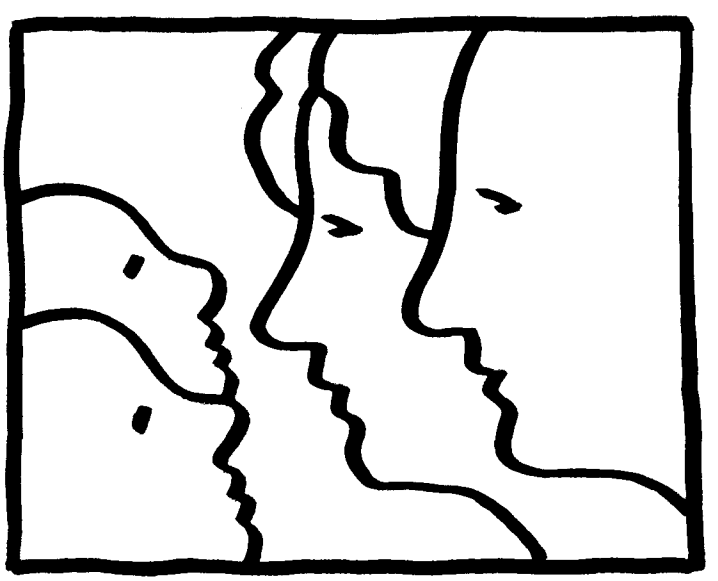
Touching account of Megan, a girl who has suffered a paralyzing spinal cord injury. With Harris, a "summer boy next door," she begins the process of emotional healing. Intermediate

Proudly Red and Black: Stories of African and Native Americans, *by William Loren Katz & Paula A. Franklin. Atheneum. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-684-31801-6 $13.95*

Paul Cuffe, a New England businessman, Edward Rose, frontier scout, and Bill Pickett, the famed rodeo rider, are among the subjects in these six lively biographies of Americans who are of Native American and African descent. While the main focus is on their battles against discrimination and oppression, their unique heritage serves as a source of pride and empowerment. Intermediate

The Real Plato Jones, *by Nina Bawden. Clarion. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-66972-3 $13.95*

At thirteen, Plato does not know who he is. His search for identity leads first to his Welsh grandparents. When his Greek grandfather dies, he returns to his family's small village and begins to understand family secrets and his heritage.
Intermediate



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Revolutions of the Heart, *by Martha Qualey. Houghton Mifflin. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-395-64168-3 $13.95*

When arguments about her Native American boyfriend alienate Cory and her bigoted older brother, Cory tries to believe her mother's saying, "Change a heart, you change the world." One heart at a time seems too slow to overcome so much misunderstanding. Secondary

The Sabbath Garden, *by Patricia Baird Greene. Lodestar Books. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-525-67430-6 $15.99*

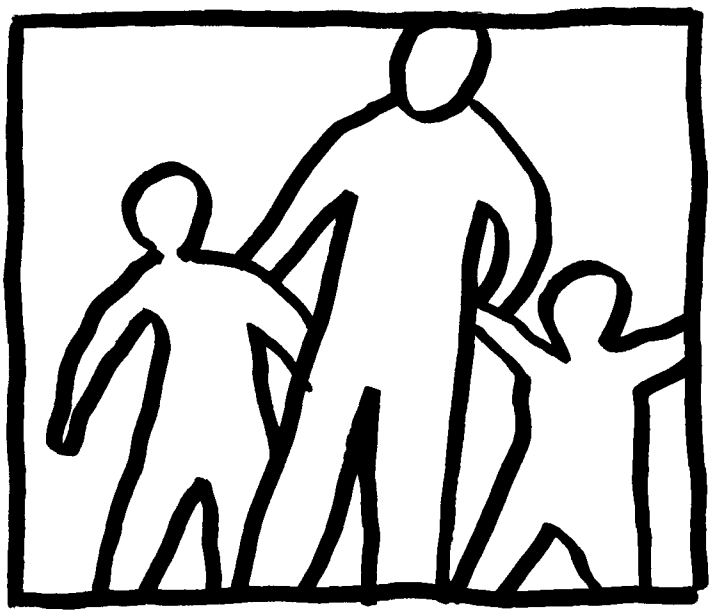
Opal Tyler, a thirteen-year-old African-American, lives in a world of drugs, crime, and squalor, and except for brief moments of glory on the basketball court, considers her life hopeless. Solomon Leshko, the elderly Jewish man who lives downstairs, resents the neighborhood's recent demographic changes. The Sabbath Garden is a memorable, moving story of the healing power created by their friendship. Intermediate

Sequoyah's Gift: A Portrait of the Cherokee Leader, *by Janet Klausner. HarperCollins. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-06-021235-7 $15*

The well-told story of the nineteenth-century Cherokee Leader who, in an effort to preserve the threatened traditions of his people, developed a syllabary for the Cherokee language. Intermediate

Shizuko's Daughter, *by Kyoko Mori. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-8050-2557-X $15.95*

After her mother's suicide, twelve-year-old Yuki spends years living with her distant father and his resentful new wife. Cut off from her mother's family, Yuki relies on her own inner strength to cope with the tragedy and to grow as a person. Japanese customs are sensitively presented throughout the story. Secondary



The Sioux and **The Navajos,** *by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. Holiday House. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-8234-1017-X and 0-8234-1039-0 $15.95 each*

These are the first two "First Americans Books" by the distinguished Lakota author and teacher. They introduce the history, culture, and variety of Native American people to young readers in handsome picture-book form. Japanese customs are sensitively presented throughout the story. Primary

Subway Sparrow, *written and illustrated by Leyla Torres. Farrar Straus & Giroux. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-374-37285-3 $15*

This charming picture book illustrates the story of a sparrow whose misfortune aboard a New York City subway train brings the passengers together in an effort to accomplish its rescue. The English text is interspersed with both Polish and Spanish dialogue. Early Childhood

Sunday Outing, *by Gloria Pinkney. Illustrated by Jerry Pinkney. Dial Books for Young Readers. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-8037-1198-0 $14.99*

Again we meet eight-year-old Ernestine Avery Powell, heroine of Gloria Pinkney's nostalgic *Back Home*, and are delighted by a beautifully illustrated story of family love and sacrifice which makes Ernestine's dream of traveling "back home," via the Silver Star, a delightful reality. Primary

The Sunita Experiment, *by Mitali Perkins. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-316-69943-8 $14.95*

The story of Sunita Sen, an eighth grader in Northern California, whose grandparents come for a visit from India. Sunita finds herself resenting her Indian heritage and embarrassed by the differences she feels between herself and her friends. Intermediate

This Home We Have Made: Esta Casa Que Hemos Hecho, *written and illustrated by Anna Hammond & Joe Matunis. Translated by Olga Karman Mendell. Crown. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-517-59339-4 $14*

The authors construct a narrative around the images in a community mural in New York City's South Bronx, painted mainly by formerly homeless children. Bold colors and surreal imagery translate into a simple story of a homeless child's longing for shelter and dream of transformation. Containing a bilingual (English/Spanish) text, a long author's note explains the mural's history. Primary

This Land Is My Land, *written and illustrated by George Littlechild. Children's Book Press. San Francisco, 1993. ISBN: 0-89239-119-7 $15.95*

The vibrant collage paintings by Littlechild, a member of the Plains Cree Nation, are introduced by comments from the artist on the disastrous impact of white culture on the lives of his people. Reverence for his ancestors and the challenges of growing

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up Native American are themes that echo through this work.
Early Childhood

Too Many Tamales, *by Gary Soto. Illustrated by Ed Martinez. G.B. Putnam. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-399-22146-8 $14.95*

Maria tries on her mother's wedding ring while helping to make tamales for a Christmas family get-together. Panic ensues when hours later, she realizes the ring is missing. Oil paintings illustrate the text. Early Childhood

Uncle Jed's Barbershop, *by Margaree King Mitchell. Simon & Schuster. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-671-76969-3 $15*

Uncle Jed, the only African American barber in the county, dreams of opening his own barbershop. Each time he has enough money saved for a start, events cause him to defer his dreams. After many sacrifices and setbacks, Uncle Jed opens his shop on his seventy-ninth birthday. One of his first customers is his niece Sarah Jean, narrator of the story. Wonderful paintings bring the time, place, and people to life.
Early Childhood and Intermediate

Vejigantes/Masquerade, *by Lulu Delacre. Scholastic. New York, 1993. ISBN: 0-590-45776-4 $14.95*

Ramon, a young boy from Puerto Rico, works hard to earn money to make himself a beautiful "vejigante" (masquerader) costume for the annual Carnival celebration in Ponce. The story of how he makes his dream come true also touches on family ties, the importance of cultural symbols, and community solidarity. With a bilingual Spanish/English text and exquisitely illustrated, the book includes historical references, directions for making a vejigante mask, and a glossary and bibliography. Primary

Voices from the Fields: Children of Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories, *by S. Beth Atkins. Photographs by the author. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-316-05633-2 $16.95*

In their own words, elicited in interviews, nine migrant children describe in prose and poetry the strength of their Hispanic families—as well as their lives of hardship and struggle. The fine photographs of the children at work and at play with their families are powerful, and put personal and compelling faces on their extraordinary and difficult situations.
Primary and Intermediate

The Way Home, *by Leigh Sauerwein. Farrar Straus & Giroux. New York, 1994. ISBN: 0-374-38247-6 $15*

Snapshots found in the attic in the final selection are the inspiration for these engaging short stories which revolve around the theme of freedoms lost and found: two slaves escape to the North by riverboat; a young boy finds his real father; a girl discovers her aunt's inner strength, and a wheelchair-bound boy meets the Apache leader Geronimo.
Secondary

Where the River Runs: A Portrait of a Refugee Family, *by Nancy Price Graff. Photos by Richard Howard. Little, Brown and Co. Boston, 1993. ISBN: 0-316-32287-3 $16.95*

Three generations of the Prek family, Cambodian refugees now living in a Boston suburb, are followed through their everyday routines, blending old customs and new practices. This black-and-white photo essay focuses on the small details of daily life, while conveying information about the dilemmas of refugees. Their changing family patterns are true for immigrants from many lands. Intermediate

For the complete "Human Family" booklist, send a number 10 envelope, self-addressed and stamped to:
The National Conference of Christians and Jews, 71 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003

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(MIT Press, $45, 320 pp.) by R. and K. Preston-Mafham filled me with hilarity (the things the wood lice get up to!) and a profound joy.

Robert Coles

Robert Coles is a child psychiatrist who teaches at Harvard University. Among his many books is The Spiritual Life of Children.

In my late twenties I worked at the Children's Hospital in Boston. I spent a lot of time with children who were never going to become grown-ups—and they knew it. I still remember some of those boys and girls; I remember the physical agonies they endured as one or another kind of cancer made its claim upon them, and I remember the fear, the apprehension, the sadness that they felt and tried to express in their often indirect ways. I especially remember an eleven-year-old named Madeleine, called Maddy by all her kin and friends, who was waging a losing battle with leukemia. Toward the end of her life she asked her parents, her older brother, please to call her by her full name; and she went further—she wrote it again and again on a note pad she kept nearby her hospital bed. She also wrote various brief statements about herself; I've long forgotten most of them, but one has stuck fast to my memory: "I had a nice time here most of the time. I'll be going soon: Good-by." She signed that poignant, resigned statement, and dated it. Even now I can remember her looking at me as I read it, then looking at me as I tried to keep looking at her—silence the only way we could both keep away tears.

I go back now to that long-ago time because each of the four recently published books that I recommend here somehow connects in my mind to Madeleine and her way of taking on life's unnerving (sometimes terrible) mysteries. Ian Frazier's *Family* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, $23, 400 pp.), is, in its own way, an effort of a wonderfully gifted and knowing essayist to tackle the same great imponderables young Madeleine contemplated. For her, time meant less than a decade; for Frazier, time goes back hundreds of years—to his ancestors and their struggle to be Americans, then to build up a strong and sound life for themselves and their descendants. His book is, in part, an extraordinary social history of our nation, told through a narration of one family's fate. But an exceptionally talented writer manages something else, too—an implicit challenge to the very nature of our human mortality. Yes, we all go into the dark; yet his book gives a life to generations of men, women, children: they are handed to us as companions by one of their own, their record a collective new life. Memory will, of course, fail them—particular readers die. But Ian Frazier has done his imaginative, sensitive best to enlarge our present world with that of others who have, like Madeleine, said good-by—and now, reach out to touch us mightily.

In a similar vein, two Southerners speak to us of their lives, ask us to remember the suffering they have experienced, the losses sustained, the victories nevertheless won. Ruthie Bolton is a pseudonym for a black resident of Charleston, South Carolina, who has given us her autobiographical *Gal* (Harcourt Brace, $19.95, 279 pp.). She is an ordinary working woman of no formal education who has a story to tell—though unlike so many of us, she also has the determination to do so, and the talent to give narrative shape to what she has seen, experienced. In that last regard, she was obviously helped enormously by the novelist Josephine Humphries, also a resident of Charleston, who generously agreed to meet with her regularly, encouraged her to make a record of her memories and reflections. The result is a book that gives one a great deal of pause: Here is a woman who has endured terrible pain, suffered innumerable betrayals, lived at the very edge of things—and yet the voice that engages us is shrewd, compassionate, sensitive, morally awake. Whence her strength of character, of soul—we who have been given so much more in life keep wondering.

Not that suffering and vulnerability don't descend (out of nowhere) on all of us—as Reynolds Price's memoir of his bout with a potentially fatal spinal cancer certainly reminds us (*A Whole New Life*, Atheneum, $20, 213 pp.). He is, as always, a marvelously humorous, sharply observant writer, whose fiction and nonfiction, both, have been an important part of our reading for many years. Now, he tells of an illness, and a response to it—the strength of will it prompted as day by day he came to terms with the new circumstances of his life (he is confined to a wheelchair). As with Madeleine, illness has urged someone to take stock of what his life means, where it is headed; and so doing, he emerges stronger than ever in certain respects. His writing life has flourished, even as he obviously can't get around as he once did. This book has much to offer all of us who someday, in some way, will come upon those fateful (and fearful) moments that will tell us a lot about who we are.

Of course, fiction, too, can bring us such moments: the spell of revelation woven by great storytellers such as Reynolds Price—and too, Dr. Ethan Canin, whose recent *The Palace Thief* (Random House, $21, 205 pp.) earns him comparison with Chekhov, the greatest writing physician of them all. Three of the four long stories in this collection are told in the first per-

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son, not an easy writing strategy; thereby, we get close, indeed, to these somewhat puzzled and fragile souls, each trying so hard to make sense of a particular life's circumstances, events. The writer who has created those characters knows how to bring wisdom to us—the kind that, ironically, comes from frustration and pain. Again, Madeleine's lonely struggle with life's fickle nature returns to me, decades later, as I meet the various kinds of loneliness a tremendously gifted storytelling physician explores so thoughtfully.

Rembert G. Weakland

Rembert G. Weakland, O.S.B., is the archbishop of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and the author of Faith and the Human Enterprise *(Orbis).*

An old professor from my seminary days once told the class that we should always be reading at least three different books: a novel, a work in our field of specialization, and a book that is totally out of our field, as a way of stretching our minds a bit, of adding new information to our storehouse, and of creating a curiosity in us for new vistas.

From the novels read recently, I have selected for recommendation Anna Quindlen's *One True Thing* (Random House, $22, 289 pp.). I wondered why she had announced that, around the end of the year, she would no longer be writing her columns for the *New York Times* on matters of current interest but would be devoting her time to writing novels. Now I see why. The book is elegantly written. It is by no means an action novel, but instead tackles the very difficult topic of the psychological growth processes of an angry young woman who is faced with some difficult life choices. The ending may seem a bit contrived, but the rest was sheer joy. It is not per se a religious novel, but that was okay with me.

In the area of religion (I hope I do not seem to stretch that point since the work I cite is not deep speculative theology), I read Father Joe Dunn's *No Lions in the Hierarchy: An Anthology of Sorts* (The Columbia Press, Dublin). The U.S. publishers changed the name to one that is less capricious and not as felicitous: *The Rest of Us Catholics: The Loyal Opposition* (Templegate Publishers, $14.95, 314 pp.). I am sure that the new name was meant to underscore some of the criticisms of aspects of the present pontificate that are found in the book. That is a shame, since there are many other worthwhile vignettes to be found in this collection of essays. The writer's cinematographic expertise comes forth at once and the portrayals are vivid and always done with a sense of humor and compassion. Much of what Father Dunn is saying in the book can be heard in the corridors of any Catholic institution these days. I find no animosity in the book. The author sums up his stance pretty well in the preface: "I once came across a story in a sermon book about a passenger who was critical of the way the captain was running the ship. So he jumped overboard in protest! Christianity would be far stronger today if, in the past, those who had rows with the skipper and crew of the Barque of Peter had stayed aboard and kept reminding both sailors and passengers that there were other possible directions in which to navigate."

Nicholas Till's *Mozart and the Enlightenment: Truth, Virtue, and Beauty in Mozart's Operas* (W.W. Norton, $29.95, 371 pp.) was a revelation to me. If there had been any doubt in my mind about Mozart's superior intelligence, in spite of all the nonsense that has been written about him and the way he has been portrayed in movies and theater, this book has taken that doubt away. It proves that Mozart understood well what the Enlightenment was all about and set about to incorporate that vision in his operas. The author shows how the Enlightenment society searched for ways of uniting the new and successful capitalist endeavors with strong social authorities that would guarantee stability but not threaten the liberties upon which at least one segment of society depended. The economic aspect of that period, in this case capitalism as then understood, is central to the thesis that the author seeks to make. The espousal of

both economic freedom and social cohesion, with the tensions embodied in trying to hold these two together, is the backdrop for the analysis of Mozart's works. Much has been known about Mozart and Freemasonry but Till places that relationship in a new and clearer perspective. The book was an eye-opener for me.

I should receive a gold medal for having read every page of David Halberstam's *The Fifties* (Fawcett Columbine, $15, 800 pp.). Like the author I am convinced that one cannot understand the famous sixties nor what has happened since that eventful decade without knowing well what happened in the fifties. In this book there is, with one exception, everything anyone could ever think of that happened in the fifties—or at least it looks that way. The index goes on and on: from Henry Aaron (first listed) through thousands of others, like Dean Acheson, Sherman Adams, Henry Ashmore, Lucille Ball, Bernard Baruch, to Elvis, Jimmy Dean, Adlai Stevenson, Robert Taft, Harry Truman, Edward Teller, Earl Warren, and, after thirty-eight columns of names and other items, ending with Sam Zemurray. (If you don't know Zemurray—or, for that matter, Henry Aaron—the index won't help until you realize that in some instances the page number it offers is off by a page. Zemurray was the head of United Fruit and was involved in the banana problems of Guatemala. There, you've learned something.)

Predictably, Milton Berle is all over the place. You can learn all you would ever want to know about the beginnings of McDonald's and Holiday Inn. But, strange-

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ly enough, in all 800 pages you will not find the name of Fulton J. Sheen anywhere. Norman Vincent Peale isn't there, either, so it is not a question of nativism. Billy Graham does receive one mention—for his opposition to the Kinsey report. (Here you can look on page 280, as reported in the index.) It would seem that, to the author of this otherwise exhaustive account, religion was not worth recording.

Suzanne Keen

Suzanne Keen, a regular Commonweal *contributor, teaches English at Yale University. Her essay on Anthony Burgess appeared in* Commonweal*'s February 11, 1994, issue.*

The judges of the big literary prizes have done a great job recently, and the books I have most often pressed on my friends include several winners from the past year. In case the endorsement of the Booker Prize, the Pulitzer, and National Book Award were not enough publicity, I want to recommend Roddy Doyle's *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* (Viking, $20.95, 282 pp.) and E. Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* (Simon and Schuster, $12, 337 pp.). *Paddy Clarke* left me breathless, moved, and amazed by the subtlety of Doyle's craft. Poems take my breath away fairly frequently, but the last time I finished a novel and had to remind myself to breathe must have been nearly a decade ago (reading William Kennedy's *Ironweed*). A novel about a ten-year-old Barrytown (Dublin) boy, *Paddy Clarke* conjures up the world of "sticks and stones may break my bones/but names and faces will never hurt me," showing that this child's motto can only be true when everything is okay at home. Humor balances the attention given to pain, although enjoying "the crunch of someone else's pain" is always an ingredient in the laughter represented and elicited. That a novel about the birth of empathy can work in such a pared-down style makes Doyle's achievement all the more impressive. I loved this novel even more than Doyle's Barrytown Trilogy: *The Commitments* (Vintage, $9, 165 pp.), *The Snapper* (Penguin, $10, 216 pp.), and *The Van* (Penguin, $10, 311 pp.).

E. Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* is the polar opposite to Doyle's novel. Mainly set in Newfoundland, the novel also examines family life, but the bewildered perspectives belong to adults rather than to a child. Proulx's deliberately choppy prose is the perfect vehicle for a style chockablock with epigrammatic statements, metaphors, and world-defining catalogs. When he meets Tert Card, the editor at *The Shipping News*, Proulx's protagonist Quoyle registers the "voice querulous in complaint." The narrator adds "For the devil had long ago taken a shine to Tert Card, filled him like a cream horn with itch and irritation. His middle initial was X. Face like cottage cheese clawed with a fork." Both the economy and the imaginative excess of this character sketch suggest the paradoxical virtues of Proulx's style. A style with such energy of its own can detract from the story, but not here. Each of the multitude of characters introduced in the first half of the book plays a role in the accelerating plot. What at first seems to be episodic, twists into a complicated knot of story. The payoff in the novel's scheme of knots (diagrams and definitions adorn each chapter) could not be more satisfying. It takes a little patience at the beginning, but *The Shipping News* turns into a wonderful novel.

John Crowley's *Love & Sleep* (Bantam, $22.95, 503 pp.) hasn't yet won a big prize, although it appeared on Harold Bloom's list of "278 Books You Should Have Read by Now" (*Esquire*, September 1994) barely a month after it appeared in bookstores! *Love & Sleep* is the second book in a four-novel sequence (*Aegypt*, the first installment, has been re-released in paper [Bantam, $12.95, 390 pp.], along with Crowley's magnificent fantasy novel, *Little, Big* [Bantam, $12.95, 538 pp.]). You don't have to know *Aegypt* to enjoy *Love & Sleep*, which relates the story of scholarly Pierce Moffat's quest for love and vocation. Crowley layers story within story; when Pierce reads, we get to read the book (by imaginary historical novelist Fellowes Kraft) over his shoulder. The subject of Pierce's research is magic, the magic of a world that no longer exists (but once did), a magic in which he does not believe (but practices). Some of the best stuff occurs when the novel loops back to Pierce's Catholic childhood, spent in an isolated Kentucky mountain town, where, among other things, Pierce and his cousins shelter and furtively baptize a girl from a mining community up the mountain. Crowley's children, women, and men are psychologically convincing, an accomplishment that makes the historical and fantastic elements of his novel all the more thrilling.

Two books of poetry would be worth looking around for: Jorie Graham's *Materialism* (Ecco Press, $13, 146 pp.) and Annie Finch, ed., *A Formal Feeling Comes: Poems in Form by Contemporary Women* (Story Line Press, $15.95, 308 pp.). If you have trouble finding poetry books, you can always call the publisher directly (Ecco Press: 800-342-3226; Story Line Press: 503-466-5352; fax 503-466-3200). Graham's *Materialism*, her fifth book of poems, investigates the relationship between the body and the soul, the seen and the unseen, the time-bound self and history. The volume includes not only poems but excerpts and adaptations from other texts by philosophers, poets, explorers, artists, and theologians, so it seems like an argument with all the evidence laid out in a trail, and the reasoning removed. Filling the spaces between others' texts are Graham's poems, including "Manifest Destiny," a wonderful poem about Shiloh, a bullet with a bite mark in it, and the process of sympathetic imagination. *Materialism* allows the reader to encounter a thinking poet's thought.

Annie Finch's *A Formal Feeling Comes* invites readers to consider contemporary women poets thinking about and using form. Finch construes form broadly to include kinds of poems (sonnets, sestinas, villanelles, ballads), poems in stanzas (quatrains, rhyme royal, heroic couplets), and poems in adaptations and new combinations of rhyme and meter. Not all the poems are strictly metrical; some use syllabics and some use patterns of repetition and internal rhyme to give free verse a backbone. A user-friendly volume, *A Formal Feeling Comes* includes comments by each of the poets on form, and two appendices explaining the forms

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of specific poems. The variety of the writing collected by Finch makes this book a very interesting collection of poems by sixty poets, and amply demonstrates the vitality of form in contemporary writing.

Of the books I've insisted my friends read this year, Melissa Fay Greene's *Praying for Sheetrock: A Work of Nonfiction* (Addison Wesley, $10, 335 pp.) stands out as the one that most surprised me. A "chronicle of large and important things happening in a very little place," the book relates the struggle for civil rights in McIntosh County, Georgia. Such a summary made me think the book would be worth reading; I didn't imagine that I would be so bowled over by Greene's writing, her skill at conveying personalities, and her dramatic construction of her story around the image of the wrecked trucks on U.S. 17, yielding in booty the goods for which black people could only pray. Greene avoids the morality-play scheme of vice and virtue that might make her story simpler, and she sacrifices nothing in vividness or in her reporting by showing the reader the failings of her hero and the kindness of her villain. Read this terrific book! If you were right here I'd make you borrow my copy.

Frank McConnell

Frank McConnell writes regularly in these pages on the media. When not watching TV, listening to jazz, or reading comic books, the abstemious McConnell teaches English at the University of California at Santa Barbara. McConnell has written criticism on the Bible as literature and on the modern novel. He is also the author of the Harry Garnish/Sister Bridget O'Toole mystery novel series (Walker and Company).

kay, Christmas books. Corny as it sounds, the older I get the more I believe that the true joy of Christmas lies in the receiving. Confess now: is there any feeling in the world like standing there in your bathrobe, 9 A.M., the tree blinking away

loonily, the coffee and brandy within reach, opening packages filled with REALLY GOOD STUFF? When—*ever* in your life—is gratification so damned *licit*?

So here are three books that are, purely and simply, really good stuff—which also means that they're the kind of stories that breathcatchingly renew your faith in the resilience of the imagination. They are: a detective novel, a science fiction novel, and a thing for which we have as yet no good name.

James Lee Burke's *Dixie City Jam* (Hyperion, $22.95, 367 pp.) is the latest in his series about Dave Robicheaux, and nails it down that Brother Burke is one of the very best fellows currently working in the great tradition of the American hard-boiled detective story. Robicheaux is a cop in the parish of New Iberia, Louisiana, a recovering drunk who's been fired from the New Orleans police department and who's trying to build a decent life with his fragile wife and their adopted daughter. Naturally, in book after book he finds himself drawn back into the byzantine, Berlinesque criminal scene in New Orleans (the most complicated city in America—no kidding), and gambling his own tensely maintained dignity against the riot of the Big Easy. In *Dixie City Jam* the plot involves a sunken submarine, sadistic neo-Nazis, a gangland feud, and a few neat torture scenes. But it also involves what I find most appealing about Burke's work, the insistence that in a violent and messy world we—that's we—must remain nonviolent, not messy, and sane. Detective fiction doesn't get much better than this. And Burke's descriptions of New Orleans are so bang-on that you can almost taste the gumbo.

Nancy Kress's *Beggars and Choosers* (Tor Books, $22.95, 320 pp.) is a vastly different novel, except that it shares—for me, anyhow—an exhilarating goodwill and joy of invention. Kress invents a twenty-second-century world in which genetic engineering and high tech have made America both affluent and class-stratified, and in which the high-functioning, trans-human mutants—the Sleepless—are involved in a scheme which aims either at the destruction or the salvation of the human race altogether. Obviously Kress, like all fine s-f writers, is talking not about the future but about the current awful state of affairs in class-ridden America. And her novel, rich and splendidly told, is both an apocalypse and a *mitzvah*, an assertion about the ineradicable goodness of people that reminds me of what s-f at its best—as in H.G. Wells—can be.

And then there's *Mister Punch* (DC/Vertigo, $24.95, 96 pp.) It's written by Neil Gaiman and drawn by Dave McKean, and I repeat my earlier assertion in these pages that Gaiman may just be the most gifted and important storyteller in English. This stunning comic book—graphic novel—whatever—is easily the most haunting, inescapable story I've read in years. I won't even try to map its complexity for you, but it's about a boy (the young Neil) discovering, at the same time, the passion and perfidy of adult life, the terror of mortality, and the impossibly healing power of storytelling—storytelling incarnated in that crudest and most anarchic of plots, the Punch and Judy puppet show. I would say this about Faulkner, Blake, and not many others, but I say it about Gaiman: if you don't read *Mister Punch*, your life will be a little less radiant than it could be.

So there. If you love somebody, buy them one of these books, and if you love them a lot, buy them all. At the end of Christmas day, on the sofa in your bathrobe under the comforter—your brandy near at hand—could there be anything better than a finely told, brilliant story to enter into—on this day that commemorates one of the *best* of stories?

As Tiny Tim would have it, God bless them, every one. Most particularly, I add—it's my essay, sue me—Brother Gaiman.

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Alane Mason

Alane Mason is an editor at W.W. Norton. She lives in New York City.

It is a constant complaint of those in book publishing that we are too overloaded with manuscripts to read for pleasure. I often feel as though I work in a bakery, my arms ever mired up to the elbows in pastry dough while trays of fragrant tarts and turnovers fresh from the oven pass beneath my nose. Friends and family ask opinions of recent bestsellers and advice on new books to read; I, struck mute with embarrassment, try to remember the last time I read a book between hard or soft covers; editing, I fear, is making me an ignoramus. In reaction I turned this spring and summer to books I should have read before, during years spent reading mostly manuscripts.

I was drawn to the shortest (with so much catching up to do, one must move quickly), and those with a flavor of foreigness to challenge New York City's particular provinciality: James Joyce's *Dubliners*, Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, Max Frisch's *Man in the Holocene*, Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (the foreign place in the novel being the eighteenth-century American Southwest).

"They don't have television. They're reading people. So be on guard!"

Among more recent works, those remote in time or place satisfy best: *In an Antique Land* (Vintage, $13, 393 pp.) by Amitav Ghosh, is a wonderful travelogue cum scholarly detective story which evokes, through fragments from documents found in a Cairo synagogue, a complex and variegated world of cultural influence and trade between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean during the eleventh century. Kathleen Norris's *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* (Houghton Mifflin, $9.95, 224 pp.), uses quotes from the early Christian desert fathers to limn the windswept landscape of the Dakotas, the land itself a meditation on the poverty and riches of asceticism. Charles Johnson's *Middle Passage* (Plume, $10, 220 pp.), winner of the 1990 National Book Award, combines the best of all worlds: a mere 209 pages, 150 years distant in its historical setting, cosmopolitan (in the best sense of the word) in its embrace of philosophy, literature, and human nature, and in its reflections on good and evil, on history and race, utterly contemporary, forceful, and wise.

For some specifically Catholic inspiration, Richard Viladesau's *The Word in and out of Season, Homilies for the Sundays of Ordinary Time* (Paulist Press, Cycle A, $9.95, 138 pp.; Cycle B, $7.95, 132 pp.; Cycle C, $7.95, 120 pp.), though directed toward his fellow priests to share ideas for Sunday reflections (much needed, many parishioners might add), also offers to the layperson that rare combination of intellectual depth and spiritual sustenance Father Viladesau proffers in his own ministry. The troubling or confusing aspects of Scripture or doctrine will not be circumvented here. Father Viladesau will go right to the heart of the difficulty, usually providing some historical or theological context which makes muddied waters somehow clear. Unlike most contemporary priests, he does not act as if theology were a specialized area of knowledge, like neuroscience, limited to an initiate; he speaks not only to our need to be guided or consoled or challenged, but also to understand; he exhorts, but he also teaches.

No editor can resist recommending books he or she has worked on, and such recommendations may not be as untrustworthy as they seem. If after having read a book several times, after having lived with it, one still loves and believes in it, that might say something. So it's not without bias that I, nonetheless, recommend as my two favorite books published this fall, David Guterson's *Snow Falling on Cedars* (Harcourt Brace, $21.95, 352 pp.), the story of the trial of a Japanese-American fisherman in the Pacific Northwest in the 1950s—an old-fashioned page-turner with a graceful prose style, a novel of subtle courage, ethical concern, resonance, even hope. The second is *Commonweal*'s own Paul Elie's collection of diverse, surprising, moving, and often profound reflections on the saints by contemporary writers (including, Richard Bausch, Avery Dulles, S.J., Tobias Wolf, Ron Hansen, Nancy Mairs, Kathleen Norris, Francine Prose). *A Tremor of Bliss* (Harcourt Brace, $22, 323 pp.) is a literary dip into a magnificent store of tradition and inspiration.

Finally, as Christmas draws near and gift-giving devolves into frantic search and empty obligation, Lewis Hyde's *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (Vintage, $14, 354 pp.) restores to us the meaning of the giving of gifts, especially those gifts, tangible and intangible, we ourselves are given. It was put into my hands by one of the nation's finest booksellers, appropriately enough, as a gift, and one well worth passing along. (Among Hyde's epigraphs is this line from the poet Czeslaw Milosz: "There are nothing but gifts on this poor, poor Earth.")

Ron Hansen

Ron Hansen is the author of five books, including most recently Mariette in Ecstasy *(HarperCollins). He lives in Santa Clara, California.*

The French have a phrase, *L'esprit d'escalier*, the wit of the staircase, which defines that frustrated feeling we have when we find the brilliant, parrying riposte only after the argument is long over and we're glumly going to bed. I often feel that way in hotel elevators when, after a fiction reading or

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bookstore signing, I have once again blanked on the question, "Are there any recent books you'd recommend?" Hours later I have a huge list in my head, but up there in front of those eager readers I fall back on a few eminently worthwhile but well-known titles that most people there had probably beaten me to. And now I can make up for that. This is my booklist of the staircase.

Susan Bergman's *Anonymity* (Farrar Straus and Giroux, $20, 198 pp.) is a harrowingly honest and heartbreaking memoir, full of healthy anger and healing love, about a Christian evangelical family dealing with the loss of their husband and father to AIDS and with the shock that he was secretly homosexual—he'd claimed his illness was many other things. Wise, passionate, beautifully written, it's the finest portrayal of fear and hiddenness in families that I have ever read.

The principal theme of Donald Hall's *Life Work* (Beacon Press, $15, 124 pp.) is precisely that of the monks of the Middle Ages, *Laborare et orare*, to work and to pray. Twenty years ago, the prize-winning poet gave up a full professorship at the University of Michigan to go back to his grandparents' farm in New Hampshire and commit himself as wholly to his prose and poetry writing as his forebears did to their fields. *Life Work* is Hall's sage and inspiring paean to "absorbedness" and to the consolation his healthy obsession offers him when cancer forces him to come to terms with his own mortality.

Reynolds Price also faced the affliction of cancer when, in 1984, an eel-like tumor was found braided onto his spinal cord. Surgery failed to get rid of the growth, radiation only hastened the gradual paralysis of his legs, whence followed chronic and excruciating pain, malaise, depression, and the too-ordinary difficulties of the handicapped. Without a hint of self-pity or false claims on beatitude, Price affectingly writes, in *A Whole New Life* (Atheneum, $20, 214 pp.), of his illness and of his healing through self-hypnosis, prolific writing, the heroic help of his family and friends, and faith in the "now appalling, now astonishing grace of God."

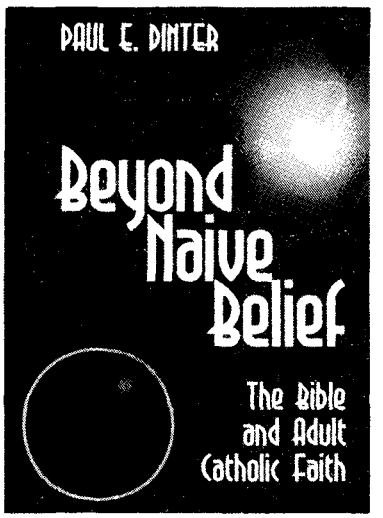
Healings of the spirit also occur in Harriet Doerr's charming second novel, *Consider This, Señora* (Harcourt Brace, $21.95, 241 pp.). Like her first novel, *Stones for Ibarra*, for which she won an American Book Award, *Consider This, Señora* focuses on the changes wrought by the land and people of Mexico on exiles from America, in this case a California artist getting over her divorce, an old widow awaiting death in the country of her birth, a frustrated woman seeking a new life, a feckless investor fleeing tax evasion charges in Arizona. With affection and humor, Doerr sketches the beauty of a Mexican hilltown where the homely and the magical delightfully coexist.

The fantastic is often near at hand in a John Irving novel, and that's especially true of his latest, *A Son of the Circus* (Random House, $25, 633 pp.). The son of the title is Dr. Farrokh Daruwalla, an orthopedic surgeon in Toronto who is visiting his hometown of Bombay to work with crippled children and dwarfs when he gets caught up in a murder investigation and the first meeting of separated twins, one a zealous Jesuit from California, the other an actor in hackneyed mystery films that have offended all of India. But the novel is so huge, so ingenious and prodigal in its plotting, so full of rambunctious, quirky life, that it seems to be about everything.

Cormac McCarthy's *The Crossing* (Alfred A. Knopf, $23, 426 pp.) is a haunting, enthralling, lyrical tale of a stoical teenaged boy tracking a she-wolf in the rangelands of New Mexico just before World War II. When he finds the wolf is pregnant, he takes her back to Old Mexico to free her, but she's caught and used for dogfighting and he finally has to kill her. When Billy Parham gets back home, he finds his parents murdered, the horses stolen, and he takes his little brother with him on another strange journey into Mexico to get back what is theirs. *All the Pretty Horses*, winner of the National Book Award, was the first volume of The Border Trilogy and *The Crossing* is the second. When the trilogy is finished it just may be the great American novel; it's truly a work of genius.

The heroism of daily life is wonderfully limned in Joanne Meschery's smart, perceptive, achingly tender novel, *Home and Away* (Simon and Schuster, $21, 284 pp.). The protagonist is Hedy Gallagher Castle,

Gives powerful new meaning to traditional truths...



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an officer at a border station below the Sierra's eastern wall. Operation Desert Storm is underway and her father, a former minister and recent stroke victim, is in the house with her and heading further into bewilderment, while her famous and often childish husband, for five years the fastest man on skis, is, in his forties, trying a comeback in Europe. Meanwhile there are girls' basketball games, gossip that the coach is a lesbian, and skirmishes about sex education in the high school. Hedy's teen-aged daughter gets her first lessons in loss and love through a friend who undergoes an abortion, even as her mother falls into an affair with a part-time soldier shipped off to Iraq. At one point it occurs to Hedy "why people are always leaving to strike new ground, set new records. Why they strive to be first in the world. The reason, I believe, is that daily life extracts too much—takes it all...the home front—here—will break your heart every time."

The home front is a war zone, too, in Jim Shepard's *Kiss of the Wolf* (Harcourt Brace, $21.95, 308 pp.), a deft, funny, disquieting thriller about the unforeseen eruption of violence in an Italian Catholic family in Connecticut. Joanie Mucherino, whose husband has abandoned her and their eleven-year-old son, Todd, is hurrying home with the boy from his Confirmation party when her Buick slams into and kills a man walking on the highway. She hides the evidence of the hit-and-run as well as she can, but in so doing orchestrates ever greater anguish for her son as she is forced to face her own capacity for wrongdoing and to find in her old flame, Bruno Minea, a friendly confidant whose own motives for helping Joanie may well be sinister. *Kiss of the Wolf* is a tight, tense, chilling novel about how human frailty and deception can offer a home to terror.

Eight great books, and the list is still far too short. Although people rightly bemoan what is happening to publishing, the fact is that American writing is as healthy and fascinating as it's ever been. I haven't mentioned half the fiction, histories, biographies, and books of poetry and theology I have profited from this past year. But I'll probably be thinking of them as I again trudge up the staircase. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

of History appears to repudiate the notion that "memories of ancient wrongs" have something to do with today's conflict.

To return to the metaphor: whatever the reasons for "the troubles," the laying down of arms is akin to dropping unnecessary defenses, which is a precondition for the healing of wounds, whether in family therapy or in politics.

As McGaughan notes, Dr. Ian Paisley does reflect the views of many and therefore must not be brushed off. But his frequent temper tantrums, in my view, do not help solve the serious problems of securing human rights and economic justice for all in Northern Ireland.

EDWARD McGLYNN GAFFNEY, JR.

What else is lost

Boston, Mass.

To the Editors: Just a note to say how eloquent and graceful I found Margaret O'Brien Steinfels's brief essay, "What Women Have Lost" [October 21]. It was the pieces of women's broken hearts that I found myself trying to put back together after abortions that converted me to see the great darkness that our culture has let in. As an Anglican, I rejoice in some aspects of our progressive Catholicism. But the utter equivocation about, if not affirmation of, feticide has made me greatly question the moral compass of our church. Perhaps the lumbering heavy conservatism of magisterial Catholicism can more faithfully compel the "gravities" of truth, moral and theological, in a world having lost all moral bearings. (REV.) JURGEN W. LIIAS

Science of the Lambs

Milwaukee, Wis.

To the Editors: Christopher Koller's article on health-care reform [November 4] is a masterly dissection of the body politic, as it looks after our physical health. I loved his description of the soul-wrenching alienation involved in setting a price for a procedure such as "resuscitation of a newborn." "Providers" like me experience a similar dislocation when we give dedicated attention to a patient—excuse me, a "contract-holder"—and become lost in a blizzard of paperwork, telephone reviews, numbers. Unfortunately, with practice it all becomes routine. We hope that "with proper oversight the quality of care will not suffer," but I doubt it. (I see significant compromises daily.) If you look into the kindly eyes of your personal physician and see them flicker up and down in columns, glazing over, driven by the clock—*caveat emptor*.

The only things I would add to Koller's illuminating diagnosis are, first, that many of us overestimate the power of science, and, along with that, the value of objectivity, of detachment from common emotions, such as pity; and, second, that the passion of planners, whether in business or government, is to lump together large groups, the bigger the better, rather than preserving the smaller groups that are livable for people. Much of medicine is a small group or one-to-one, hands-on, intuitive trade. The good doctor notices your look, your gestures, your mix of values, is willing to listen for your best choice, even if you don't put it into words. He responds in your own idiom.

It may not be entirely a distortion that many in the public view the new doctor, born of the large-scale social planners, as another Hannibal Lecter.

WILLIAM J. HOUGHTON, M.D.

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City lights

HARRY J. BYRNE

The following is adapted from a regular column, "From the Pastor's Desk," appearing in the parish bulletin of Epiphany Parish in New York City.

The news media, both print and TV, are preoccupied by the things that go wrong. The sudden violent act, the disaster, the pathologies of life claim disproportionate attention. A dominant or regular disposition to goodness requires too wide an angle for the narrow focus of the TV camera or the limited space of a news article. But New York abounds in examples of the day-to-day, year-to-year practice of virtue, examples we often fail to notice.

My leg injury of last May has kept me out of the subway: too many stairs. But I found an interesting world in the city's buses. The mix of people, their stoic endurance in traffic jams, and the steady patience of the bus drivers carry their own inspiration. The drivers don't have steel rails to guide their multi-ton vehicles. Each moment requires steady attention and careful control in the flood of trucks, cars, taxis, bicycles, and rollerbladers. There is no idle moment save when, like a miniature *Queen Mary*, the bus sweeps up to its curbside wharf and exchanges passengers to and from the street. Then the patient wait for people with canes, purse fumblers, and those who want out when they find they are on a "Limited" bus. A big salute to our city's bus drivers—saints of patience not yet properly canonized.

A dominant disposition to goodness is found in many other places in our city, very frequently among the men and women of the NYPD. A week ago I was chatting with some of the men of Emergency Service Unit, Truck One, opposite the rectory. One of their smaller trucks rolled up and Ken Winkler and Mark DeMarco jumped out.

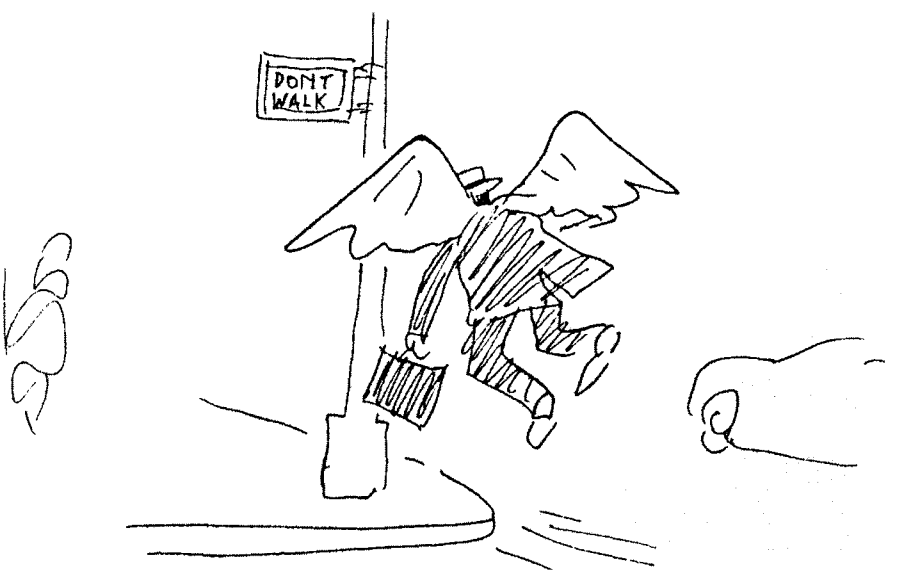
Mark shook out a wet rubber suit. "A little applause for Ken," he said. "He just pulled someone out of the river." At the pier at the end of 23rd Street, someone had heard a splash and phoned 911. A police helicopter arrived and dropped a life ring, which the thrashing figure pushed away. Ken, already suited up, dove into the murky water. When his 100-foot line ran out, he called for more line. Another was quickly attached, and in another fifty feet he reached the struggling figure, who spouted water at him and told him to get lost. But Ken persisted and soon his line tenders had both back on shore, along with the rejected life ring. All in a night's work!

Ken had initially failed a scuba diving test (he didn't know how to swim). So on his own time he went to the YMCA and learned to swim, passed the test, and is now a certified "Dive Master" who teaches scuba diving to ESU officers. Ken lives with his wife, Alice, on Staten Island, with their two children, a five-year-old who is in first grade at Saint Charles's school, and a one-year-old. Ken went to Our Lady of Perpetual Help school and Xavierian Academy in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, then spent a couple of years at Kingsboro Community College. He entered the department in October 1981. Alice joined in January 1982. They met, worked together, and dated; in 1988 they were married.

Alice today is a detective in the Staten Island "Crimes Against Persons" squad. "How do you deal with two little kids?" I asked. "We juggle schedules as best we can, and when that doesn't work we alternate with Larry Oliveti on Truck One and his wife—she's a sergeant on Staten Island."

Not a pulse-throbbing story, but what it shows is that there's a lot of commitment in this city, of dominant disposition to goodness and a deep respect for what life is all about. A big salute to Ken and Alice, to Mr. and Mrs. Larry Oliveti, and their partners in blue. □

Msgr. Harry J. Byrne is a priest of the Archdiocese of New York.



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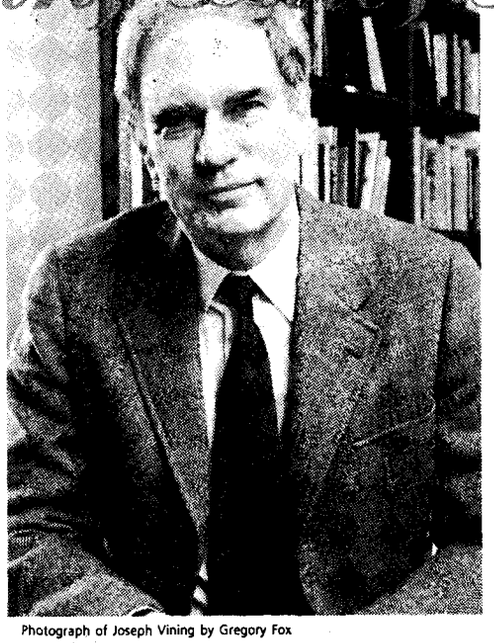

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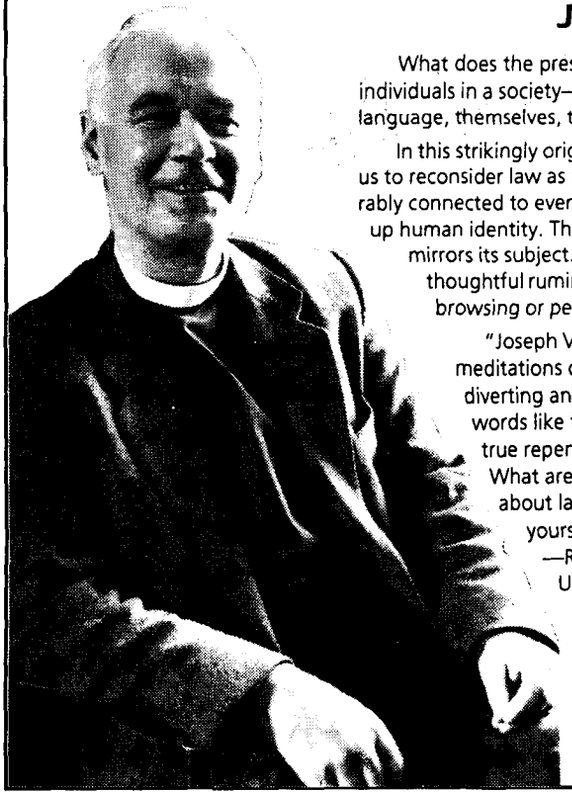

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